BOVVELS

OR,

ADISCOVERY OF THE

Neare and Deare Love, Union and

Communion betwixt CHRIST, and the

CHVR CH, and confequently betwixt Him and every beleeving Sonle.

Delivered in divers Sermons on the fourth, fifth and fixth Chapters of the CANTICLES.

By that Reverend and faithfull Minister of the Word,

Dr. SIR s, late Preacher unto the Honourable Society of Grayes-Inne, and Master of Katharine Hall in CARREDOE.

Being in part finished by his owne pen in his life-time, and the rest of them perused and corrected by those whom he intrusted with the pubbiling of his Works.

CANT. 4. 11.

Thou hast ravished my heart my Suffer my Spoule: Thou hast ravi-Go Seedmy heart with one of thine eyes, and with one chaine of thy

city necke.

LONDON.

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IN RES CHRISTI,

ET.

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D. D.

THOMAS GOODVIN.
PHILIPPYS NYB.

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To the Christian Reader.

HE perusall of this Booke, being committed unto me by an antient and a faithfull friend of mine, I found it (I confesse) so

full of heavenly treasure, and such lively expressiós of the unvaluable riches of the love of Christ toward all his poore fervants that fue and feeke untohim, that I fent unto the godly and learned Author carneftly increasing him to publish the fame, judging it also gether unmeer that fo precious matter should be concealed from publike ufe. When, be excused him. felfe by undervaluing his owne meditations ; but withall fignified his defire of the Churches good, if by any thing in his works kunight never to little be promored, I could not but declare my felfe in recommending this Treatife, as a very profitable and excellent help both to the understanding of that dark and most divine Scrip-

Tothe Reader.

Scripture, and also to kindle in the heart all heavenly affections unto lesus Christ.

It is well known how backward I am, and ever have been to cumber the Presse, but yet I would not be guilty in depriving the deare children of God of the spirituall and sweet consolations, which are here very plentifully offered unto them.

And the whole frame of all these Sermons, is carried with such Wisdome, Gravity, Piety, ludgement, & Experience, that it commends it felf unto all that are godly wife : and I doubt not but that they shall finde their temptations answered, their fainting spirits revived, their underfrandings enlightned; and their graces confirmed, fo as they shall have cause to praise God for the worthy Authors godly and painfull labours, And thus defiring the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort, to bleffe this worke to the confolation and edification of those that feek his favour, and desire to feare his holy Name I reft,

Thine in lefus Christ, ob



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SERMON L

CANT. V. L.

I am come into my Garden, my Sifter, my Spouse, I have eaten my hony-combe with my hony: I have drunke my wine with my milke; Bat O friends, Drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O beloved!



Ther bookes of Solomon lie more obvious and open to common understanding; but as none entred into the Holy of Holies, but the High Priest, to none can enter into the mystery of this Song of Songs, but such as have

more near Communion with Christ. Songs, and especially Marriage. Songs, serve to expresse mens owne loyes, and others praises. So this Booke containes

The mutual loyes, and mutual Praises betwint

And as Christ and his Church are the greatest persons that partake of humane nature, so what-

Introduction

Levis.

foever is excellent in the whole world, is borrowed to fet out the excellencies of these two

great Lovers.

It is called Solomons Sone, who next unto Chrift, was the greatest Son of Wildome that ever the Church bred: whose understanding as it was large as the fand of the fea, fo his affections, ef pecially that of Love was as large : as we may fee by his many wives, & by the delight he fought to take in whatfoever nature could affoord. Which affection of Love in him misplaced, had been his undoing, but that he was one beloved of God; who by his Spirit raifed his foule to lovely Objects of a higher nature. Here in this argument there is no danger for the deepest wit. or the largest affection (yea of a Solomon) to overreach: for the knowledge of the love of Christ to his Church, is above all knowledge. The Angels themselves may admire it, though they cannot comprehend it. It may well therefore be called the Song of Solomon; the most excellent Song, of a man of the highest conceit, and deepest apprehention, and of the highest matters, The Intercourfe betwixt Christ the highest Lord of Lords, and his best beloved contracted Spoufe.

There are diverse things in this Song, that a corrupt heart (unto which all things are defiled) may take offence; but to the pure all things are pure. Such a singfull abuse of this heavenly booke is far from the intention of the holy. Ghost init, which is by stouping low to us, to take advantage to raise us higher unto him; that by taking

advantage

Eph.3.19.

advantage of the sweetest passage of our life (Marriage) and the most delightful affection (Love) in the sweetest manner of expression (by a Song) he might carry up the soule to things of a heavenly nature. We see in Summer, that one heate weakens another; and agreat light being near a little one, drawes away and obscures the slame of the other: so it is when the affections are taken up higher to their sit Object, they die unto all earthly things, whilst that heavenly slame consumes and wastes all base affections and earthly desires. Amongst other wayes of Marrispanion, there be two remarkable:

1. By imbittering all earthly things unto w, whereby the affections are deaded to them.

2. By Therving more noble, excellent, of fit objects. That the foul iffuing more largely and ftrong. ly into them, may be diverted, and so by degrees die unto other things. The holy Spirit hath chofen this way in this Song, by clevating and railing our affections and love; to take it off from other things, that so it might run in its right channell. It is pitty that a fweet streame should not rather run into a garden, then into a puddle. What a shame is it, that man having in him such excellent affections, as Love, ley, Delight, should cleave to durty base things that are worse than himselfe, so becomming debased like them? Therefore the Spirit of God, out of mercy and pitty to man, would raise up his affections, by taking comparison from earthly things, leading to higher matters, that onely deferve Love, loy, Delight,

Simile.

Simile.

Two especiall wayes of mortification. Delight, and Admiration. Let Gods stouping to us, occasion our rising up unto him; for, here the greatest things, The Mystery of Mysteries, the Communion betwixt Christ and his Church, is set out in the familiar comparison of a Marriage, that so we might the better see it in the glasse of a comparison, which we cannot so directly conceive of, as we may see the Sun in water, whose beames we cannot so directly look upon: Only our care must be, not to looke so much on the colours, as the Picture; and not so much on the Picture, as on the Person it selfe represented: that we looke not so much to the resemblance, as to the Person resembled.

Some would have Solomon by a Spirit of Prophecy, totake here a view of all the time, from his Age to the second comming of Christ: and in this Song, as in an abridgement, to set downethe severall Passages and Periods of the Church, in severall ages, as containing diverse things which are more correspondent to one age of the church than another. But howsoever this Song may contain (we deny not) A story of the Church in severall ages: yet this hinders not, but that most passages of it agrees to the spiritual state of the Church in every age; as most interpreters have thought. In this Song there is,

1. A strong desire of the Church of nearer Communion with Christ; and then,

2. Some declining againe in affection.

3. After this we have Her recovery and regain-

4. The

4. The Church fals again into a declining of Affection, whereupon followes a further strangenesse of Christ toher then before, which continues untill,

5. That the Church perceiving of Christs constant affection unto her, notwithstanding her unkind dealing, recovers and cleaves faster to

Christ than ever before, Chap.3.

These passages agree to the experience of the best Christians in the state of their owne lives. This observation must carry strength through this whole Song, That, there is the fame regard of the whole Church, and of every particular member in regard of the chiefest priviledges and graces that accompany falvation. There is the same reason of every drop of water, as of the whole ocean, all is water; and of every spark of fire as of the whole Element of fire, all is fire; of those Hemogeneall bodies, as we call them, there is the fame respect of the part, and of the whole. And therefore as the whole Church is the spoule of Christ, so is every particular Christian: and as the whole church desires fill nearer Communion with Christ, fo doth every particular member. But to come to the words:

I am come into my Garden, &c.

This Chapter is not so well broken and divided from the former as it might have bin; for it were better and more consequent, that the last Verse of the former Chapter were added to the beginning of this.

CANT. IV. XVI.

Awake, O North-wind, and come then South,

B 3

blow

An Observation for the whole Sorg.

blow upon my Garden, shat the Spices therof may flow outslet my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his

pleasant fruits.

And therfore, by reason of connexion of this Chapter with the former Verse, we will first fpeake fomwhat of it briefly, only to make way for that which followes. The words containe.

1. A turning of Christs speech to the winds to blow upon bis Garden : with the End why?

That the Spices thereof may flow out.

2. We have an invitation of Christ by the church, to come into his Garden, with the End, To eat

his pleasant fruits.

It may be a Question, whether this Command be the words of Christ, or the defire of his Spoule. The words are spoken by Christ, because he cals it (My Garden) and the Church after invites him to eat of (His) pleafant fruits, not of (Hers) yet the words may be likewise, an answer to a former. fecret defire of the Church ; whereof the order is this. The Church being sensible of some deadnesse of Spirit; secretly desires some further quickning. Christ then answers those defires, by commanding the winds to blow upon her. For, ordinarily christ first sup defires, and then, answers the defires of his own Spirit, by further increase, as here.

Awake theu North-wind, and come thou South, and blow upon my Garden, &c.

For the first Point named, we see here, that chrift fends forth his Spirit, with Command to all meanes, under the name of North and South-

oind.

wind, to further the fruitfulnesse of his Church, The wind is natures fanne, what winds are to the Garden, that the Spirit of Christ, in the use of meanes, is to the soule. From comparison setcht from Christs commanding the winds; we may in generall observe, That all Creatures stand in obedience to Christ, as ready at a word, when seever he speakes to them. They are all as it were assect until he awakes them. He can call for the wind out of his treasures when he pleases, he holds them in his fist.

Which may comfort all those that are Christs, that they are under one that hath all creatures at his becke under him, to doe them service, and at his checke to do them no harme. This drew the Disciples in admiration to say, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the Seas obey bim? And cannot the same power still the winds and waves of the Churches and States, and cause a suddencalme, is (as the Disciples) we awake him with our prayers.

Secondly, we see here, that Christ speakes to winds contrary one to another, both in regard of the coasts from whence they blow, and in their quality: but both agree in this, that both are necessary for the Garden: where we see, That the courses that Christ takes, and the meanes that he uses with his Church, may seeme contrary, but by a wise ordering all agree in the wholsome iffue. A prosperous and an afflicted condition are contrary, a milde and a sharp course may seeme to crosse one another. Yet, sweetly they agree in this, that as the

Observation from Christs commanding the winds.

Use.

Mat. 8 27.

Observation from the contrary blasts of winds. Church needeth both, so Christ uses both for the Churches good. The North is a nipping wind, and the South a cherifting wind, therefore the South wind is the welcommer and sweeter after the North-wind bath blowne. But howsoever, all things are ours, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, things present and to come, life, death, &c. all things worker ogether for good to us, being in Obrist.

1 Cor.3.11. Rom, 8.28.

Wet.

Hence it is that the manifold wifedome of christ maketh use of such variety of conditions; and hence it is, that the Spirit of Christ is mild in some mens Ministeries, and sharpin others. Nay, in the very same Minister, as the state of the soule they have to deale withall requires.

2.

Sometimes againe, the people of God need purging, and fomtimes refreshing, whoteuponthe Spirit of God carries it felfe furably to both conditions, and the Spirit in the godly themselves drawes good out of every condition; fure they are that all winds blow them good; and were it not for their good, no winds should blow upon them. Burin regard that thefe times of ours, by long peace and plenty grow cold, heavy and fecure, we need therefore all kinds of winds to blow upon us, and all little enough. Time was when we were more quicke and lively ; but now the hear of our foirits are abated, we make therefore take heed of it, and quicken the fethings that are ready to die, or elfe in fired of the North and South winde, God will fend an East winde that shall drieup all, as it is, Hof. 13.15.

Revel 3.2.

Again, if Christ can raise or lay, bladup or the

looseall kind of winds at his pleasure, then if means be wanting or fruitleffe; It is be that fares so the clouds, drop not, and to the winds blow not : Therefore, we must acknowledge him in want or plenty of meanes. The Spirit of christ in the use of means is a free agent, sometimes blowes ftrongly, fometimes more mildly, fomtimes not at all, no creature hath thefe winds in a bag at command, and therefore it is wifedome to yeeld to the gales of the Spirit, though in someother things (as Solomon observes) it may hinderto ob- Becl. 11 4. ferve the winds, yet here it is necessary and profirable to observe the winds of the Spirit.

Now for the cleare understanding of what we

are to speake of letius first observe,

1. Why the Spirit of God in the wfe of the meanes is compared towind. And then,

2. Why the Church is compared to a Garden : which hal be handled in the proper place. But first for the wind.

I. The wind bloweth where it lifteth, as it is, Ich. 2.8. So the Spirit of Godblowes freely, and openeth the heart of some, and powreth grace plentifully in them.

2. The winde (especially the North-winde) bath a cleanfing force; fo the Spirit of God purgeth our hearts from dead works to ferve the living God, making us partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet I

3. The wind di perfeth, and feattereth clouds, and makes a ferenty in the agre. So doth the Spirit differfe fach clouds, as corruption and Satan raife

In what Respects the Spirit of God is compared to wind.

raise up in the soule, that we may clearely see

the face of God in Iefus Christ.

4. The wind hath a cooling and a tempring quality, and tempers the distemper of nature: as in some hot countries there be yearely Anniversarie winds which blow at certaine times in Summer, tempering the heate. So the Spirit of God allayeth the unnatural heats of the soul in sierie Tentations, and bringeth it into a good temper.

5. The wind being subtil searcheth into every corner and crany. So the Spirit likewise is of a searching nature, and discerneth betwixt the joynts and the marrow, betwixt the flesh & the spirit, &c. searching those hidden corruptions, that nature could never have found out.

6. The winde hath a cherishing and a fruitifying force. So the Spirit is a quickening and a cherishing Spirit, and maketh the heart which is as a barren wildernesse, to be fruitfull.

7. The wind hath a conveying power of sweet smels in the ayre, to earry them from one to another. So the Spirit in the word conveyeth the seeds of Grace and comfort from one to another; it drawes out what sweetnesse is in the spirits of men, and makes them fragrant and delightfull to others.

8. The wind against beares downe all before it, beats downe honfes and trees, like the Cedars in Lebamon, turnes them up by the roots, and layes all flat. So the Spirit is mighty in operation, there is no standing before it: It brings downe

moun

mountaines, and every high thing that exalts it felfe, and layes them levell:nay, the Romane and those other mighty Empires could not stand before it.

For these respects and the like, the blowing of the Spirit is compared to wind. For which end Christ here commands the winds to

Blow upon his Garden.

[To blow, &c.] See here the order, linking and concatination of things one under another, to the prospering of a poore flower or planting garden; not only foyle is needfull, but ayre and wind alfo and the influence of Heaven: and God commanding all, as here, the winds to blow upon his Garden. To this end as a wonderfull mercy to his people, it is faid, Hof. 2.22. Andit Shall come to paffe in that day, I will beare faith the Lord, I will hearethe Heavens and they foull beare the earth, and the earth fall heare the corne, the wine, and the oyle; and they shall heare Jezreel. As the Creatures are from God, so the order and dependance of creatures one from another : to teach us, not onely what to pray for, but also what to pray fitly for, Not only to pray for the dew of heaven, but alto for feafonable and cherishing winds. It is not the foyle, but the feafon that makes fruitfull; and that Non ager, fea from feafonable winds and influences. So in (bi) rituall things there is a chaine of Caufes and Effects; Prayer comes from Faith, Rom. 10.14. Faith from the Hearing of the Word, Hearing from a Preschers by whom God by his Spirit blowes upon the heart, and a Preachen from Gods fending . If the

frutt m.

God

God of Nature should but hinder and take away one linke of natures chaine, the whole frame would be disturbed. Well, That which Christ commands here, is for the winds to

Blow upon his Garden.

In what Refpects we need the blawing of the Spirit.

Exod, 17.12.

And we need blowing, our spirits will be becalmed els, and stand at a stay, and Satan will be fure by himself, and such as are his bellowes, to blow up the seeds of sinfull lusts in us. For, there are two spirits in the Church, the one alwayes blowing against the other. Therefore, the best had need to be stirred up, otherwise with Moses, their hands will be ready to fall down, and abare in their affection. Therefore we need Blowing.

I. Inregard of our naturall inability.

2. Imnegard of our dulnes and heavines cleaving

to mature occasionally.

a. In regard of contrary winds from without, \$2tion hash his bellowes filled with his fpirit, that hinders the worke of grace all they can, fo that we need not only Christs blowing, but also his stopping other contrary winds charthey blow not, Rev. 7.1.

4. In regard of the estate and condition of the new Coursant, wherein all beginning, growth, and ending is from Grace, and nothing but

Graser

3. Because and Grace, wishout a fresh supply, will not bold against new crosses and tentations.

Therefore when Christ drawes, let us run after him, when he blows, let us open unto him, It may be the last blast that over me shall have from him.

Use.

And let us fet upon Duties with this encouragement, that Christ will blow upon us, not only to prevent us, but also to maintaine his own Graces in us. But O! where is this stirring up of our selves, and one another upon these grounds?

But, Why is the Church compared to a Garden?

Christ herein takes all manner of termes to expresse himselfe and the state of the Church, as it is to him, to shew us that wheresoever we are, we may have occasion of heavenly thoughts, to raise up our thoughts to higher matters. His Church is his Temple, when we are in the Temple, it is a field when we are there; A Garden, if we walke in a Garden: It is also a Sponse and a Sister, &c. But more particularly the Church is resembled to a Garden.

I. Because a Garden is taken out of the common wast ground; to be appropriated to a more particular use; so the Church of Christ is taken out of the wildernesse of this wast world, to a particular use. It is in respect of the rest, as Goshen to Egypt, wherein light was, when all else was indarknes. And indeed wherin doth the Church differ from other grounds, but that Christ hath taken it in: It is the same soyle as other grounds are; but he dresset and first to beare spices and herbs.

2. In a garden nothing comes up naturally of it felfe, but as it is planted and fet: fo nothing is good in the heart, but as it is planted and fet by the heavenly Husbandman. We need not fow the wildernes, for the feeds of weeds profper naturally, the earth is a mother to weeds, but a ftep-

Quest.

In what re.
Spects the
Church is compared to a garden.

I. Exod. 9-16.

.7

Ioh. 1 5.3 2

mother -

Againe, of all other places we most delight in our gardens to make there, and take our pleasure, and take care therof, for fencing, weeding, watering, and planting. So Christs chiefe care and delight is for his Church: he walks in the midst of the seven golden Candlestickes; and if he defend and

therewith comes the feeds of all graces.

Rey. 2. 1.

Simile.

Reafon.

being will figur that Christ is at cost with me in fol-

lowing

of his love. For the care of this bleffed Husbandman is to prune us fo, as to make us fruitfull. Men care not for heath and wilderneffe whereupon they bestow no cost: So when God prunes us by crosses and afflictions, and sowes good seed in us, it is a signe, he meanes to dwell with us, and delight in us.

And then also, we should not strive so much for common liberties of the world that common people delight in, but for peculiar graces, that

God may delight in us as his garden.

And then let us learne hence, not to despise any nation or person, seeing God can take out of the wast wildernesse whom he will, and make the Desart an Eden.

Againe, let us bleffe God for our felves, that our lor hath fallen into fuch a pleasant place, to be planted in the Church the place of Gods de-

light.

And this also should move us to be fruitfull, for men will endure a fruitlesse tree in the wast wildernesse, but in their garden who will endure it? Dignity should mind us of duty. It is strange to be fruitlesse and barren in this place that we live in, being watered with the dew of Heaven, under the sweet instructed of the meanes. This fruitlesse estate being often watered from Heaven, how searefully is it threatened by the Holy-Ghost? that it is neare unto cursing and burning: For inthis case, visible Churches, if they prosper not, God will remove the hedge, and lay them wast, ha

Heb, 6, 8.

ying a garden elfewhere. Somerimes Gods plants Sunu. L. profper better in Babylon, than in Index fristo be feared God may complaine of us, as he doth of his people, Ier. 2. 21. I have planted thee a noble vine, how art thou then come to be degenerated? If in this case we regard iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not regard the best thing that comes from us, as our prayers, Heb. 12.18. Heb. 12. We must then learne of himselfe, how and wherein to please him. Obedience from a broken heart is the best sacrifice. Marke in Scriptures what he abhors, what he delights in : we use to fay of our friends would God I knew how to pleafe them: Christ teacheth us, that without faith it is impossible to please him. Let us then strive and labourto be fruitfull in our Places and Callines : for it is the greatest honour in this world, for God to dignifie us with fuch a condition, as to make us fruitfull. We must not bring forth fruit to our selves, as Holio.t. God complaines of Ephraim. Honour, Riches, and the like, are but secondary things, arbitrary at Gods pleasure to cast in but, to have an active heart, fruit full from this ground, that God hath planted us for this purpose, that we may doe good to mankind this is an excellent confideration not to prophane our calling. The bleffed man is faid to be, a tree planted by the waters side, that brings forth fruit in due feafon; bueit is not everyfruit, not that fruit which catales complaines of, Deut 32.32. The wine of Dragons; and the gall of After; but good fruit, as John Speaks, Every tree that bringerh not forth good fruit, is howne down, and cofe into the fire. Mar. 3.10. Laftly,

Heb. 11.6.

SERM. I.

Zach. 2.5.

Rev. 32.1.

Laftly in that the Church is called Christs earden, this may strengthen our faith in Gods care and protection. The Church may seeme to lie open to all incursions, but it hath an invisible bedge about it a wall without it, and a well within it. God himselfe is a wall of fire about it, and his Spirit a well of living waters running through it to refresh and comfort it. As it was faid of Canam, fo it may be faid of the Church : The eye of the Lord is upon it all the yeare long, and he waters it continually. From which especiall care of Gods over it, this is a good plea for us to God : I am thine, fave me a I am a plant of thine owne ferting, nothing is in me, but what is thine, therefore cherish what is thine: So for the whole Church the plea is good; the Church is thine, fence it, water it, defend it, keep the wilde bore out of it. Therfore the enemies thereof final one day know what it is to make a breach upon Gods vineyard. Inche meanetime, let us labour to keep our hearts as a garden, that nothing that defileth may enter. In which respects the church is compared to a garden, upon which Christ commands the North and South wind (all the means of Grace) to blow.

But to what end must these winds blow upon the

That the Spices thereof may flow out.

The end of this blowing is you fee, That the Spices thereof may flow out, good things in us lie dead and bound up sinleffe the Spirit let them out, We ebbe and flow, open and flow, as the Spirit blowes upon

as, without blowing, no flowing. There were graci- Sunu. I. ous good things in the Church, but they wanted blowing up and further spreading, whence we may observe. That,

We need not only grace to put life into us at the first, but likewife grace to quicken and draw forth that gracethat we have. This is the difference betwixt mans blowing and the Spirits; man when he blowes (if grace be not there before) spends all his labour upon a dead coale, which he cannot make take fire. But the Spirit first kindles a holy fire, and then increases the flame. Christ had in the use of meanes wrought on the Church before, and now further promoteth his own worke. We must first take in, and then fend out; first, be cisternes to containe; and then; conduits to convay. The wind first blowes, and then the Spices of the Church flow out; we are firft fweet in our felves, and then (weet to others.

Whence we see further. That, it is not enough to be good in our felves, but our goodnesse must flow our; that is grow more ftrong, ufefull to continue and streame forth for the good of others. We must labour to be (as was said of lobn) burning and thining Christians : for Christ is not like a boxe of oyntment thut up and not opened, but like that boxe of oyntment that Mary powred out, which perfumes all the whole house with the (weetnesse thereof : For the Spirit is berein like wind: it carries the fweet favour of grace to others. A Christian to foon as he finds any rooting in God, is of a spreading disposition, and makes

Obfero.

Obsero.

SHEM. 1.

Philem. 10.

makes the places he lives in the better for him. The whole body is the better for every good member; as we see in one simus. The meanest perfons when they become good, are usefull and profitable; of briers become flowers; the very naming of a good man casts a sweet savour, as presenting some grace to the heart of the heaver. For, then me have what we have to purpase; when others have accasion to his seed for as, for conveying comfort to them by us. And for our furtherance herein, therefore, the minds are called upon to awake and blow upon Christs Garden.

That the Spices thereof may flow out.

Objerv.

Rev. 1.8.

Hence we fee alfo, That, Where once God begins, he goes on, and delights to adde encouragement to encouragement, to maintaine new fetters up in Roligion. and doth not only give them shock of grace at the beginning, but also helps them to trade , He is not only Alpha, but Omega unto them : The Beginning and the Ending. He doth not onely plant graces, but also watereth and cherisheth them; wherethe Spirit of Christ is, it is an encouraging Spirit: For not only it infufeth grace, but alfo ftirs it up, that we may be ready prepared for every good worke, otherwise we cannot doe that which we are able to doe, the Spirit must bring all into exercise, else the habits of grape will lie afleep; we need a present Spirit to doe every good : not only the power to will, but the will it felferand not only the will, but the deed is from the Spirit. Which should the usup to goe to Christ, that he may stirup his owne graces in usithat they may flow out.

Use.

Let us labour then in our selves to befull of goodnesse, that so we may be sitted to doe good to all: as God is good and does good to all, so must we strive to be as like him as may be. In which case for others sakes, we must pray, that God would make the winds to blow out fully upon us, That our Spices may slow out for their good. For a Christian in his right temper thinks, that he hath nothing good to purpose, but that which does good to others. Thus far of Christs Command to the North and South-wind to awake and blow upon his Garden, That the Spices thereof may slow out. In the next place we have,

2. Christs Invitation by the Church is come into his Garden. With the End thereof, To eat his

pleasant Fruits.

Which words shew, The Churches surther desire of Christs presence to delight in the graces of his own spirit in her. She invites him to come and take delight in the Graces of his owne Spirit. And she cals him Beloved, because all her love is, or should be imparted and spent on Christ, who gave himself to a cursed death for her. Our love should run in strength no other way, therfore the Church cals Christ her Beloved. Christ was there before, but she desires a further presence of hims whence we may observe, That,

Whereforwer grace is truly begun and stirred up, there is still a surther desire of Christs presence, and approaching daily more and more neare to the soule, the Church never thinks him nearenough to her, until she be in heaven with him. The

Objerv.

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SHEM. 1.

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Objerv.

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SERM. I. Rev. 22.17. true Sponse and Bride alwayes (unlesse in desertion and temptation) cryeth, Come Lord Iesus, Come quickly. Now these degrees of Christs approaches to the soul until his Second Comming are, That he may manifest himselfe more and more in desending, comforting and enabling his Church with Gracesevery turther manifestation of his presence, is a further Comming.

But why is the Church thus earnest ?

Reaf. 1 .

First, because grace helps to see our need of Christ, and so helps us to prize him the more; which high esteeme breeds an hungring earnest desire after him, and a desire of further likenesse and sutablenesse to him.

2.

Secondly, because the Church well knowes, That when Christ comes to the soule, he comes not alone, but with his Spirit, and his Spirit with abundance of peace and comfort. This sheeknowes what need she hath of his Presence, that without him there is no comfortable living: For wheresoever he is, he makes the soule a kind of Heaven, and all conditions of life comfortable.

Ure.

Hence we may fee that those that do not desire the presence of Christ in his Ordinances, are (it is to be feared) such as the wird of the Holy-Ghost never blew upon. There are some of such a disposition, as they cannot endure the presence of Christ-such as Antichrist and his lims, whom the presence of Christ in his Ordinances blasts and consumes. Such are not onely prophane and worldly persons, but proud hypocrites, who glory in somthing of their owne, and therefore their

hearts

hearts rife against Christ and his Ordinances, as SETM. I. laying open, and shewing their emptinesse and carnalneffe. The Spirit in the Sponfe is alwayes faying to Christ, come. It hath never enough of him, he was now in a fort present: But the Church(after it is once blowneup) is not latisfied without a further presence. It is from the Spirit, that we defire more of the Spirit, and from the presence of Christ, that we defire a further Prefence and Communion with him. Now,

The End and Reason why Christ is defired by the Church to come into his Garden, Is.

[Toeat his pleasant fruits.] that is, to give him contentment. And is it not fit that Christ should eat the fruit of his owne vine, have comfort of his owne Garden, to taste of his owne fruits. The onely delight Christ hath in the world, is in his Garden: and that he might take the more delight in it, he makes it fruitfull, and those fruits are precious fruits, as growing from plants fet by his owne hand, relishing of his owne Spirit, and so fitted for his taft. Now the Church knowing what fitted Christs tast best, and knowing the fruits of grace in her heart, desireth that Christ would delight in his own graces in her, and kindly accept of what she presented him with: Whence we fee, That,

A gracious heart is privy to its owne grace and fincerity, when it is in a right temper : and fo far as it is privy, is bold with Christ in a sweet and reverend manner. So much fincerity, so much confidence: If our heart condemne us not of unfincerity, we

C 4

may

nessein every good worke. And this knowledge must not only be a generall wifedome in know. ing truths, but a speciall understanding of his good will to us, and our special duties againe to him.

Againe, that we may please Christ the better, labour to be cleanfed from that which is offenfive to him : let the fpring be cleane. Therefore the Plalmift defiring that the words of his mouth and the meditations of his heart might be acceptable before God, first begs cleanfing from his fe-

cret fins.

And still we must remember, that he himselfe must worke in us, what soever is well-pleasing in his fight, that fo we may be perfect in every good thing to doc his will, having grace whereby we may serve him acceptably. And one prevailing argument with him is, that we defire to be fuch as he may take delight in, The upright are his delight. It cannot but pleafe him when we defire grace, for this end that we may please him. If we study to please men in whom there is but little good; should we not much more study to please Christ the fountain of goodnesse: Labour therefore to be spirituall; for to be carnally minded is Rom. 8.6. death, and those that are in the flesh cannot please God.

The Church defires Christ to come into his garden, to eat bu pleasant fruits. Where we fee, The Church gives all to Christ : The Gardenis bis, the Fruit his, the pleasant nelle and precions nelle of the Fruit is his. And as the fruits pleafe him, fo the hamble acknowledgment that they come from

him.

Pfal. 19.12.

Oblero.

SERM. I.

a Chron,

him, doth exceedingly pleafe him. It is enough for us to have the comfort, let him have the glory. It came from a good Spirit in David, when he faid, of thine owne Lord I give thee, &cc. God accounts the workes and fruits that come from us to be ours, because the judgement and refolution of will, whereby we doethem is ours. This he doth to encourage us; but because the grace whereby we judge and will aright comes from God. It is our duty to ascribe what soever is good in us, or comes from us, unto him : fo God shall lose no praise, and we lose no encouragement. The imperfections in well-doing are only ours, and those Christ will pardon, as knowing how to beare with the infirmities of his Spoule, being the weaker veffell.

Ufe.

This therefore should cheere up our spirits, in the wants and blemishes of our performances. They are notwithstanding, precious fruits in Christs acceptance, so that we defire to please him above all things, and to have nearer communion with him : fruitfulnesse unto pleasingnesse may fland with imperfections, fo that we be fenfible of them, and ashamed for them. Although the fruit be little yet it is precious, there is a bleffing in it. Imperfections help us against tentarions to pride, not to be matter of discouragement which Saran aimes at. And as Christ commands the North and South-wind to blow for cherishing: To Satan labours to ftir up an East pinching wind, corake either from endevour, or to make us heart leffe in endeavour. Why frould we think bafely

of that which Christ thinks precious? Why should we thinke that offensive which he counts as incense? We must not give false withesse of the worke of grace in our hearts, but blesse God that he will work any thing in such polluted hearts as ours. What though as they come from us, they have a relish of the old man, seeing he takes them from us, and perfumes them with his owne sweet o dors, so presents them unto God. He is our High-Priess, which makes all acceptable, both Persons, Prayers and Performances, sprinkling them all with his bloud.

Rev. 8,3.

Heb.9.13.

To conclude this Point, let it be our study to be in such a condition wherein we may please Christiand whereas we are daily prone to offend him, let us daily renew our covenant with him, and in him; and fetch encouragements of well-doing from this, that what we doe, is not onely well-pleasing unto him, but rewarded of him. And to this end desire him, that he would give command to North and South; to all fort of meanes, to be effectuall, for making us more fruitfull, that he may delight in us as his pleasant Gardens; and then what is in the world, that we need much care for, or seare?

Now upon the Churches Invitation for Christ to come into his Garden, followes his gracious answer unto the Churches Desire, in the first verse of this fift Chapter.

CANT. V.I.

Iam comeinto my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse, thave gathered my myribe with my spice. Thave ea-

ten

ten my boney-combe with my honey: I bave drunk my wine with my milke; eat 0 friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, 0 beloved.

Which words containe in them,

An answer to the Desire of the Church, in the latter part of the werse formerly handled: Awake thou North-wind, and come thou South, &c.

Then Vers. is let forth, The secure estate of the Church at this time, I sleep, but my beart waketh, in setting downe whereof, the Holy-Ghost here by Solomon shewes likewise,

The loving Intercourse betwixt Christ and the

Church one with another.

Now Christ upon the secure estate and condition of the Church desires her, To open unto him, Ver.2. Which desire and waiting of Christ is put off and sleighted with poore and slender excuses, Ver.3. I have put off my coat, how shall I put it

on, &c.

The successe of which excuses is, that Christ seemes to goe away from her (and indeed to her sight and sense departs) Ver. 6. I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himselfe, &c. Wherenpon she layes about her, is restlesse, and enquires after Christ from the watchmen, who missile, wound her, and take away her vaile from her, Ver. 7.

Another Intercourse in this Chapter here is, That the Church for all this gives not over searching after Christ: But asks the Daughters of Ierusalem, what was become of her Beloved, Ver. 8. and withall in a few words, but full of large expression.

fion, the relates her cafeurro them, That he was Same L ficke of love ; and fo chargeth them totall her Belo wed if they find him. Wherupon a question is moved by them touching her Beloved Ver, o What is the Beloved more than another Beloved? She takes occasion(being full of love) which is glad of all occasions to speak of her Beloved, to burit forth into his Praises, by many elegant Expressions, Fer. 10,11,12,8cc.

1. In generall, fetting him at a large distance, beyond comparison from all others to be The chiefest of tenthousand, Ver. 10.

2. In particular , Ver. BI. &c. His bead is no

most fine gold &c.

The Ifwe whereof was, That the Daughters of I for falem became likewife coamoured with him. Chap 6,1, and thereupon also enquire after him: Whither is the Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women, &c. Unto which demand the Church makes answer, Chap. 6.2. and so Fer. 2. of that Chapter, makes a confident triumphant close unto all thefe grand paffages forenamed. I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, &c. all which will better appeare in the particulars themselves.

The first thing then which offereth it felfe to our confideration is, Christs answer to the Churches

Invitation, Chap. 4.16.

I am come into my Garden, my Sifter, my Spoofs, I have gathered my myrrhe with my fice; beverauen my boney-combe with my honey & I have drunke my wine with my milke, Eat O frichds, drinke, set drink abundantly o believed, in which verse mediave, I. Christs

Ob erv.

SERV. I.

1. Christs answer to the Churches petition [I

2. A Compellation, or Description of the

Church [My Sifter, my Spoule.]

3. Christeacceptation of what he had gotten there, [I have gathered my myrrhe with my spice; I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey.]

4. There is an invitation of all Christs friends to a magnifique abundant feast, [East O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O be-

loved.

For the first then, in that Christ makes such a reall answer unto the Churches Invitation, I am come into my Garden, &c. We see, That Christ comes into his garden. 'Tis much that he that hath heaven to delight in, will delight to dwel among the sons of sinfull men, but this he doth for us, and so takes notice of the Churches Petition,

Let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant fruit. The right speech of the Church that gives all to Christ, who when she hath made such a Petition, heares it. The Order is this.

First of all. God makes his Church lovely, planteth good things therein, and then stirs up in her good desires; both sitnesse to pray from an inward gracious disposition, and holy desires: after which, Christ hearing the voice of his owne Spirit in her, and regarding his owne preparations, heanswers them graciously. Whence, in the first place we may observe, That,

God makes no good, firres up baly defires in me,

The Order of Gods bearing bis Church.

Observ.

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How the beart is prepared to prayer.

and then answers the desires of his boly Spirit in me. SERM. I. A notable place we have for this, Pfd. 10.17. which hewes how God first prepares the heart to pray, and then hearesthele dell of the foule stirred up by his owne Spirit, Les thou haft bear the defires of the humble; none are not to pray but the humble, fuch as differentheir owne wants: Thou wilt prepare their bearts, thou wilt make thine eare to heare. So Rom. 8.26. It is faid, Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities ; for, we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit it selfe makethintercession for us, with greanings which cannot be uttered. Thus the Spirit not onely stirres up our heart to pray, but also prepares our hearts unto it. Especially, this is necessary for us, when our thoughts are confused with trouble, griefe, and Puffions, not knowing what to pray. In this case the Spirit dictates the words of prayer, or elfe, in a confusion of thoughts sums up all in a volie of fighes and unexpressible groanes. Thus it is true, that our hearrs can neither be lifted up. to Prayer, nor rightly prepared for it, in any frame fitting, but by Godsowne Spirit. Nothing is accepted of God toward heaven & happines, but that which is spirituall; all faving and fanctifying good comes from above. Therefore God must prepare the heart, stirre up holy defires, dictare prayer : must doe all inall, being our Alpha Rev. 1.6. and omega.

Now, Godheares our prayers. First, because the Materials of thefe holy defires are good in themfelves, and from the Person from whence they come, his Belo-

Wby God beares our prayers. Reason I. SERM. L

Rcv. 8. 3.

wed Sponfe, as it is, Cant. 2. 14. where Chrift defiring to heare the voice of his Church, faith, Let me feetin commence, and let me bearethy voice; for freet is by and thy countenance is comely. Thus the voil of the Spoule is sweet, because it is ftirred up by his owne Spirit, which burnes the Incense, and whence all comes which is savingly good. This offering up of our prayers in the name of Christ, is that which with his sweet odors perfumes all our Sacrifices and Prayers, because being in the Covenant of Grace, God respects whatsoever comes from us, as we doe the

defires of our near friends.

And then againe, God heares our Prayers, Because he looks upon us as we are in election and choice of Godthe Father who hath given us to him. Not only as in the neare bond of marriage, husband and wife; but also as he hath given us to Christ, which is his plea unto the Father, Ich. 17 6. Thine they were then gavest them me, &c. The desires of the Church please him, because they are stirred up by his Spirit, and proceed from her than is his: whose voice he delights to heare, and the prayers of others for his Church are accepted, because they are for her that is his Beloved.

To confirme this further, fee 1/a. 58.9. Thou then fhalt cry, and the Lord fhall answer; theu fhalt call, and prefently he shall fay, Here I am, &c. fo as foone as Daniel had ended that excellent prayer, the Angell telleth him, At the beginning of thy supplications the decree came forth, &c. So because he knows what to put into our hearts.he knowes

Dan 9.19.

our defires and thoughts. And therefore accepts | SERM. I. of our prayers and heares us; because he loves the voice of his owne Spirit in us. So it is faid, He fulfils the desires of them that feare him; and heis neare to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. And our Saviour he faith, Aske andye shall receive, &c. So we have it, I loh. 5.14. And we know if we aske any thing according to his will, be heareth us.

Let it therefore be a fingular comfort to us, that in all wants, fo in that of friends, when we have none to goeto, yet we have God to whom we may freely powre out our hearts, there being no place in the world that can restraine us from his presence, or his Spirit from us, he can heare us and help us in all places. What a bleffed eftate is this? None can hinder us from driving this trade with Christ in heaven.

And let us make another use of it likewise, to be a means to stirre up our hearts, to make use of our priviledges. What a prerogative is it for a favourite to have the Eare of his Prince, him we account happy: furely he is much more happy, that hath Gods eare, him to be his Father in the covenant of grace: Him reconciled, upon all occasions to powre out his heart before Him, who is mercifull and faithfult, wife and most able to help us. Why are we discouraged therefore? and why are we cast downe? when we have such a powerfull, and fuch a gracious God to goe to in all our extremities. He that can pray, can never be much uncomfortable.

Cant, 2.14. Pfal.145.18.

Mat.7.7.

Use I.

U/e 2.

Pfal 42 ult.

SBRM.I.

The greateft toffe of all.

Cafes wherein one is unfit to pray.

A strong motive to fantification.

So likewise, it should stirre us up to keep our peace with God, that so we may alwayes have accesse unto him, and communion with him. What a pitifull case is it to lose other comforts, and therewith also to be in such a state, that we cannot goe to God with any boldnesse: It is the greatest losse of all, when we have lost the spirit of Prayer. For if we lose other things, we may recover them by Prayer. But when we have lost this boldnesse to goe to God, and are afraid to looke him in the face (as malesactors the Judge) this is a wofull estate.

Now there are diverfe cases wherein the soule is not in a fate fit for Prayer. As that first, Pfal. 66. 18. If I regardiniquity in my heart, the Lord will not regard my Prayer. If a man hath a naughty heart, that purpofeth to live in any finne against God, he takes him for an enemy, and therefore will not regard his Prayer. Therefore we must come with a resolute purpose, to breake off all finfull courses, and to give up our selves to the guidance of Gods Spirit. And this will be a forcible reason to move us therunto, because solong as we live in any knowne fin unrepented of, God neither regards us nor our prayers. What a fearfull effate is this that when we have fuch need of Gods favour in all estates; in sicknesse, the houre of death, and in spirituall temptation, to be in fuch a condition as that we dare not go to God? Though our lives be civill, yet if we have falfe hearts that feed themselves with evill imaginations, and with a purpose of finning (though we act it not) the Lord will not regard the prayers of SERM. I. fuchan one, they are abominable (The very facrifice of the wicked is abominable.)

Another case is, when we will not forgive others. We know it is directly fer downe in the Lords Prayer. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespasse against us; and there is further added, Ver. 15. If you for give not men their trefpafses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you. If our hearts tell us we have no disposition to pardon, be at peace and agreement, then we doe but take Gods Name in vaine, when we ask him to forgive our fins, and we continue in envy and malice. In this case God wil not regard our prayers, as it is faid; I care not for your Prayers, or for any fervice you performe to me:why ? For your bands are full of bloud: you are unmercifull, of a cruell fierce disposition, which cannot appeare before God rightly, nor humble it felfe in prayer: If it doth, its owne bloudy and cruell disposition will be objected against the prayers, which are not mingled with faith and love, but with wrath and bitternese. Shall I look for mercy that have no mercifull heart my felfe? Can I hope to find that of God, that others cannot finde from me ? An unbroken disposition which counts Pride an ornament, that is cruell and fierce, it cannot goe to God in prayer: For who foever would prevaile with God in prayer, must be humble; for our supplications must come from a leving peace- Phl.73. able disposition where there is a resolution against all fin. Neither is it sufficient to avoid gradging and

D 2

Mat.6.13.

malice

SERM. I.

malice against these; but we must look that others have not cause to grudge against us, as it is commanded, Mat. 5.23. If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembrest that thy Brother hath ought against thee: leave there thy gift before the altar, and goe thy way; first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy gift. So that if we do not seek reconciliation with men unto whom we have done wrong, God will not be reconciled to us, nor accept any service from us.

It then we would have our prayers, and our Persons accepted, or respected, let us make conscience of that which hath bin said, and not lose such a blessed priviledge as this is, that God may regard our prayers. But here may be asked,

How shall I know whether Godregard my prayers

or not ?

First, When he grants the thing prayed for, or enlargeth our hearts to pray still. It is a greater gift then the thing it selfe we beg, to have a spirit of prayer with a heart enlarged: For as long as the heart is enlarged to prayer, it is a signe, that God hath a special regard of us, and will grant our petition in the best and sittest time.

When he answers us in a better and higher kind, as Paul when he prayed for the taking away of the Prick of the flesh, had promises of sufficient

grace.

When againe, He gives us inward peace, though he gives not the thing: as Phil.4.7. In nothing be carefull, but in all things let your requests be made to God, with prayer and thanks giving.

Quest.

Answ.1.

2.
How to know when God beares our grayers.

4

3.

But

But fomtimes he deth not answer our requests.

It is true he doth not, but the peace of God which paffeth all under standing guards our hearts & minds in the knowledge and love of God Sothough he answers not our prayers in particular; yet he vouchfases inward peace unto us, assuring us that it shall go well with us, though not in that particular we beg. And thus in not hearing their prayers, yet they have their hearts desire, when Gods will is made knowne. Is not this sufficient for a Christian, either to have the thing, or to have inward peace, with assurance that it shall goe better with them, then if they had it; with a spirit enlarged to pray, till they have the thing prayed for? If any of these be, God respects our prayers.

Again, in that Christ is thus ready to come unto his Garden upon the Churches Invitation, we may further observe, That,

Christ wonch fafes his gracious Presence to his chil-

dren upon their defire of it.

The point is cleare, from the beginning of the world, the Church hath had the presence of Christ alway: For, either he hath been present in Sacrifices, or in some other things, signes of his presence, as in the Bush, or some more glorious manifestation of his presence, the Arke, and in the Cloud, and Pillar of sire, and after that more gloriously in the Temple: he hath ever been present with his Church in some signe or evidence of his presence, he delighted to be with the children of men. Sometimes before that, sometimes he assumed a body, and afterward laid it downe

D 3

SERM, I. Quest.

Observ.

Exod. 25.22. Exod. 25.22. Exod. 13.21.

againe

SERM. I.

Pfal.65,2.

againe untill he came indeed to take our nature upon him never to leave it againe. But here is meant, a spiritual presence most of all; whichthe Church in some fortever had : now defires and he offers as being a God bearing prayer. And to instance in one place for all, to see how ready Christ hath alwaies been to shew his presence to the Church upon their desire. What else is the burden of the 107. Pfalme, but a repetition of Gods readinesse to shew his presence in the Church, upon their feeking unto him, and unfained defire of it, notwithstanding all their manifold provocations of him to anger, which is well fummed up, Pfal. 106.43. Many times did he deliver them, but they provoked him with their counsell, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheles. be regarded their affliction when be heard their cry.

That the Church is carried from defire to defire.

It doth not content the Church to have a kind of spiritual presence of Christ; but it is carried from desireto desire, ril the whole defire beaccomplished: For, as there are graduall presences of Christ, To there are sutable desires in the Church which rife by degrees. Chrst was present, 1.by his gracious Spirit. And then, 2. more graciously present in his Incarnation the fweetest time that ever the Church had from the beginning of the world untill then. It being the defire of nations; for the description of those who lived before his comming, is from the waiting for the confolation of Ifrael, that is, for the first comming of Christ. And then there is a third and more glorious presence of Christ, that all of us wait for, whereby we are described

described to be such, as wait for the comming of SERM. I. Christ ; for the soule of a Christian is never latisfied untill it enjoy the highest desire of Christs presence, which the Church knew well enough must follow in time. Therefore she especially defires this spirituall presence in a larger and fuller measure, which she in some measure already had. So then Christ is graciously present in his Church, by his holy Spirit. I will be with you (faith he) unto the end of the world. It is his promife, when I am gone my felfe ; I will not leave

be alway with you. But, How shall we know that Christ is present in us?

you comfortleffe, but leave with you my Vicar-Generall(the Holy Spirit, the Comforter) who shall

To know this, we shall not need to pull him from heaven, we may know it in the Word and Sacraments, and in the Communion of Saints : for these are the conveyances whereby he manifests himself, together with the worke of his own gracious Spirit in us; for as we need not take the Sun from Heaven to know whether or not it be up or be day, which may be known by the light, heate, and fruitfulnesse of the creature : And as in the Spring, we need not looketo the Heaven to fee whether the Sun be come near us or not: for looking on the Earth, we may see all greene, fresh, lively, ftrong and vigorous. So it is with the prefence of Christ, we may know he is present, by that light which is in the foule, convincing us of better courses to be taken of a spirituall life, to know heavenly things, and the difference of DA

Mat. 18.

John 16.

Quest. An/W.I. How to know that Chriff is present in us.

SARM. I.

them from earthly, and to fet a price upon them. When there is together with light, a heat above nature. The affections are kindled to love the best things, and to joy in them.

And when together with heate there is strength and viger to carry us to spiritual duties, framing us to a holy communion with God, and one with

another.

And likewise, when there is every may cheer sulmesse and enlargement of Spirit; as it is with the
creature when the Sun approacheth. For these caufes the Church desires Christ, that she may have
more light, life, heate, vigor, strength, and that
she may be more cheerfull and fruitfull in duties. The soule when it is once made spirituall,
doth still desire a further and further presence of
Christ, to be made better and better.

What a comfort is this to Christians, that they have the presence of Christs far forth, as shall make them happy, and as the earth will afford. Nothing but Heaven (or rather Christ in Heaven) it selle, will content the shilde of God. In the meane time his presence in the Congregation, makes their soules (as it were) Heaven. If the Kings presence, who carries the Court with him, makes all places where he is a Court: So christ becarries a kinde of heaven with him; where sever he is, his presence hash with it, his, light, comfort, strength and all. For one beame of his countenance will scatter all the clouds of griefe whatsfoever. It is no matter where we be, so Christ be with us. If with the three children in a fiery sur-

That where Christ is present, there heaven u in some degrees.

Danig.

I am come into my Garden

nace, it is no matter, if a fourth be there alfo. So, if Sam. I. Christ be with us, the flames nor nothing shall hurrus. If in a dungeon, as Paul and Sylas were: If Ad 19.52, Christs presence be there by his Spirit to enlarge our foules, all is comfortable what foever. It changeth the nature of all things, fweetneth every thing, befides that fweetneffe which it brings unto the foule, by the presence of the Spirit, as we fee in the Acts, when they had received the Holy-Ghost more abundantly, they cared not what they fuffered, regarded not whipping; nay, were glad that they were accounted worthy to fuffer any thing for Christ. Whence came this fortitude? from the presence of Christ, and the Comforter which he had formerly promifed ?

A& 5.41.

That baving Chrifts pre-(ence, we need feare nothing.

So let us have the Spirit of Christ that comes from him, then it is no matter what our condition be in the world:upon this ground let us feare nothing that shall befall us in Gods cause, whatfoever it is. We shall have a spirit of prayer at the worlt. God never takes away the spirit of Supplication from his children, but leaves them that. untill at length he possesse them fully of their defires. In all Chrifts delaies, let us looke unto the Caufe, and to our Carriage therein: Renew our Repentance, that we may be in a fit ftate to goe to God, and God to come to us. Defire him to fit us for prayer and holy communion with him, that we may never doubt of his presence.

SERM. II



出版对于4回的"对大概的基本。

The fecond Sermon.

CANT. V.I.

I am comeinto my Garden, my Sifter, my Spoufe: I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice: I have gathered my honey-combe with my honey: I have drunke my wine with my milke: Eat 0 friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, 0 beloved:



His fong is a mirror of Christslove, A discovery of which we have in part in this verse. Wherein Christ accepts of the invitation of the Church, and comes into his Gara-

den; and he entertaines her with the termes of sifter and Sponfe. Herein observe the description of the Church, and the sweet Compellation My Sister, my Spouse.] Where there is both affinity and confanguinity, all the bonds that may tye us to Christ, and Christ to us.

1. His Sifter, by blond.

2. His Sponfe, by Marriage.

Christ is our Brother, and the Church and every particular true member thereof is his fifter. Igoe (faith Christ) To my Father and to your Father, to my God, and to your God. Goe (faith he) and

John 20.17.

tell my Brethren; this was after his refurrection, his SERM. II advancement did not change his disposition. Go tell my brethren that left me founkindly go tell Peter that was most unkind of all, and most cast downe with the sense of it. He became our Brother by Incarnation: For, all our union is from the first union of two natures in one person. Christ became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; to make us spiritually bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.

Therfore, let us labour to be like to him, who for that purpose became like to us, Immanuell, God with us, that we might be like him, and partake of the divine Nature. Whom should we rather defire to be like then one fo great, fo gracious, fo lo-

ving ?

Againe, Christ was not ashamed to call us Brethren, nor abhorred the Virgins wombe, to be four up in those darke cels and straits; but tooke our base nature, when it was at the worst, and not only our nature, but our miserable condition and curse due unto us. Was not he ashamed of us and shall we beashamed to owne him and his cause? Against this Cowardise it is a thunderbolt. which our Saviour Christ pronounceth: He that is ashamed of me before men bim will I be ashamed of before my Father, and all the holy Angels. It argues a base disposition, either for frowne or favour to defert a good cause in evill times.

Againe, It is a point of comfort to know that we have a Brother, who is a favourite in Heaven, who though he abased himselfe for us, is yet Lord 163.7. 14. 2 Pet. 1,4.

Mark, 8, 38.

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over all. Unlesse he had been our brother, he could not have been our Husband; for Husband and Wife should be of one nature. That he might marry us. Therefore he came, and tooke our nature, fo to be fitted to fulfill the worke of our Redemption. But now he is in Heaven, fet down at the right hand of God : the true Tofeph, the high Steward of Heaven, he hath all power committed unto him, he rules all. What a comfort isthis to a poore foul that hath no friends in the world, that yet he hath a friend in Heaven, that will owne him for his Brother, in, and through whom he may goe to the Throne of Grace boldly, and powre out his foule. What a comfort was it to Islephs brethren, that their brother was the second person in the kingdome?

Heb 4.15,16.

AQ.9.4.

Againe, It fould be a Motive to have good Chriflians in high estimation, and to take heed bow me wrong them for their Brother will take their part. Saul, Saul, why perfecuteft thou me? faith the head in Heaven, when his members were troden on upon earth. It is more to wrong a Christian, then the world takes it for; for Christ takes it as done to himfelfe. Absolom was a man wicked and unnaturall, yet he could not endure the wrong that was done to his fifter Thamar. Iacobs fons tooke it as high indignity, that their fifter should be fo abused. Hath Christ no affections now he is in Heaven, to her that is so near him as the Church is how foever he fuffer mento ryrannize over her for a while, yet it will appeare ere long, that he will take the Churches part, for he is our Brother.

My Sister, my Spoufe.

The Church is the Daughter of a King, begotten of God, the Sister, and Spoule of a King, because the is the Sifter, and Spoule of Chrift, and the Mother of all that are spirituall Kings; the Church of Christ is every way Royall. Therefore, we are Kings, because we are Christians. Hencethe Holy-Ghost doth add here to Sifter, Speuse: indeed taking the advantage of fuch Relations as are most comfortable to set out the excellent and transcendent Relation that is between Christ and his Church, all other are not what they are termed so much, as glasses to see better things. Riches, Beauty, Marriage, Nobility, &c. are scarce worthy of their names; these are but Titles, and empty things, though our base nature make great matters of them; yet the reality and substance of all these are in heavenly things. True Riches are the heavenly Graces; true Nobility is to be borne of God, to be the Sifter and Spoule of Christ. True pleasures are those of the Spirit, which endure for eyer, and will fland by us, when all outward comforts will vanish. That mysticall union and fweet communion is fet down with fuch variety of expressions, to shew, that what soever is scattered in the creature severally, is in him intirely. He is both a Friend, and a Brother, a Head, and a Husband to us, therefore he takes the names of all: whence we may observe further,

That, the Church is the Spouse of Christ. It springs out of him, even as Eve taken out of adams Rib; (so the Spouse of Christ) was taken

SERM. H

The Churches royall descent.

Why the warkery of Christs love to the Church is so diversty expressed.

Objero.

out of his fide(when it was plerced) the Church rose out of his bloud and death; for he redeemed it, by fatisfying divine justice: we being in such a condition that Christ must redeem us before he could wed us. First, he must be incarnate in our Nature, beforehe could be a fit husband : and then, because we were in bondage and captivity. we must be redeemed before he could marry us: he purchased his Church with his own bloud. Christ hath right to us, he bought us dearly.

Ad, 20.28.

Againe, another foundation of this Marriage between Christ and us, is Confent; he workes us by his Spiritto yeeld to him, there must be consent on our part, which is not in us by nature, but wrought by his fpirit, &c. We yeeld to take him upon his owne tearmes; that is, that we shall-leave our fathers house, all our former carnall acquaintance : when he hath wrought our confent, then the marriage between him and us is strooke up.

Some few refemblances will make the confideration of this the more comfortable. 1. The Husband takes his wife under his owne name, the loofing her owne name is called by his. So we are called Christians of Christ. 2. The Wife is taken with all her debt, and made partakers of the Honours, and Riches of her Husband. Whatfoever he harh is hers, and he stands answerable for all her debts: fo it is here, we have not only the name of Christ upon us, but we partake of his honors, and are Kings, Priefts, and Heires with him. Whatfoever he hath, he hath taken us into the fellow ship of it; fo that his Riches are outs, and likewife, what-

How Christ muft be taken

Rev. 1. 5,6.

The duty of Ministers.

whatfoever is ours, that is ill, he hath taken it up on him, even the wrath due tous for he came between that and us, when he was made fin, and a curse for us: fo there is a bleffed charge between 2 Cor. 5.21. Christ and us; his Honours and Richesare ours: We have nothing to bestow on him, but our beggery, finnes, and miseries, which he tooke upon him. Those that bring together these two different par-

ties are the friends of the Bride; that is, the Ministers, as it is, John 3.23. They are the parany mphi, the friends of the Bride, that learne of Christ what to report to his Spoule; and so they wooe for Christ, and open the Riches, Beauty, Honor, and all that is lovely in him, which is indeed the especiall duty of Ministers, to lay open his unfearchable Riches, that the Church may know what a husband the is like to have if the cleave to him; and what an one she leaves, if she for sake him. It was well faid in the Councell of Bafil out of Bernard, Nemo committit Sponfam fuam Vicario; nemo enim Ecclesia S ponsus eft: None commits his wife to a Vicar, for none is the Husband of the Church. To be Husband of the Church is one of the incommunicable Titles of Christ, yet usurped by the Pope. Innocent the third was the first that wronged Christs bed by challenging the Title of Sponsus, Husband of the Church, Bernard forbids his scholler Eugenius this ritle, Epist.237.ad Eugenium. It is enough for Minifters to be friends of the Bride. Let us yeeld him to be Husband of the Church, that hath given Saam. II.

himselfeto sanctifie it with washing of water and bloud, Eph. 5.26. we are a wife of bloud to him.

In this fweet Conjunction, we must know, that by nature we are cleane otherwife then Spoufes; for what was Solomons wife, Pharaohs daughter? a Heathen til she came to be Solomons Spouse. And as we read in Mofes, the strange woman must have her haire cut off and her nailes pared, before the should be taken into the Church, there must be an alteration: so before the Church (which is not Heathenish, but indeed Hellish by nature, and led by the spirit of the world) be fit to be the Spoule of Christ, there must be an alteration and a change of nature; Christ must alter, renew, purge, and fit us for himselfe; the Apostle saith, Eph. 5.16. It was the end of his death, not onely to take us to Heaven, but to fanctifie us on earth. and prepare us that we might be fit Sponfes for himfelfe.

Ifa.11.7,8. Iohn 3.3.

Use I. Consolation.

Vxori li non

Let us oft thinke of this nearnesse between Christ and us (if we have once given our names to him) and not be discouraged for any sin or unworthinesse in us. Who sues for a debt when she is married? Therefore answer all accusations thus: Goe to Christ; if you have any thing to say to me, goe to my husband; God is just, but he will not have his justice twice satisfied, seeing what sever is due theremuno is satisfied by Christ our Husband? What a comfort is this to a distressed conscience; if sinne cannot dismay us, which is the ill of ills and cause of all evill, what other ill can dismay us? He that exhorts us to beare with the instrmities

OD

one of another, and hath enjoyned the husband SERM. IL to beare with the wife (as the weaker vessell) will not he beare with his Church(as the weaker veffell) performing the duty of an husband in all our infirmities ?

Againe, His defire is to make her better, and not to calt her away for that which is amisse. And for Outward Ills, they are but to refine, and make us more conformable to Christ our Husband, to fit us for heaven, the fame way that he went. They have a bleffing in them all, for he takes away all that is hurtfull, he pitties, and keeps us as the apple of his eye. Therefore, let us often thinke of this, fince he hath youch fafed to take us so near to himselfe. Let us not lose the comfort that this meditation will yeeld us. We love for goodnesse, beauty, riches, but Christ loves us to make us fo, and then loves us because we are so in all estates whatsoever.

And if Christ be so near us, let us labour for chaste judgements, that we doe not defile them with errours, feeing the whole foule is espoused to Christ. Truth is the Spouse of our understandings; it is not left to us to be wanton in opinions, to take up what conceit we will of things: so we ought to have chaste affections, not cleaving to base things: It hath been oft times seen that one husband hath had many wives, but never from the beginning of the world, that one wife hath had many husbands. God promifeth to betroth his Church to him in righteousnesse and faithfulneffe; that is, as he will befaithfull to

1 Pet-3.7.

Zach. 2.8.

U/63.

Veritas eft Sponfa infele SERM. II. To the thall by his grace be faithfull to him, faith-

That our affections are like their objects, fulneffe shall be mutuall, the Church shall not be false to Christ: sothere is no Christian soule must thinke to have many husbands; for Christ in this case is a jealous husband. Take heed therfore of spirituall harlotry of heart, for our affections are for Christ, and cannot be better bestowed. In other things we lofe our love, and the things loved; but here we lese not our love; but this is a perfecting love, which drawes us to love that which is better then our felves. We are as we affect, our affections are as their Objects be : If they be fet upon better things then our felves, they are bettered by it, they are never rightly bestowed but when they are let upon Christ; and upon other things as they answer and stand with the love of Christ. For, the prime love, when it is rightly bestowed, it orders, and regulates all other loves what foever. No manknowes how to use earthly things, but a Christian that hath first pitched his love on Christ, then seeing all things in him, and in all them a beame of that love of his, intending happinesse to him, so he knowes how to use every thing in order. Therefore let us keep our Communion with Christ, and esteeme nothing more then his love, because he esteemes nothing more then ours.

Quest.

Anfw.1.

How to know if we be espoused to Christ or not.

But how shall we know whether we be espoused to Christ or not?

Our hearts can tell us, whether we yeeld confent to him or not. In particular, whether we have seceived him as he will be received, as a right

right husband; that is, Whether we receive him to SIRM. II. bernled by him, to make him our Head. For the wife when she yeelds to be married, therewith also surrenders up her owne will to be ruled by her husband; lo far she hath denied her own will, the hath no will of her owne. Christ hath wifedome enough for us, and himfelfe too, whose wisedome and will must be ours : To be led by divine Truths fo far as they are discovered unto us, and to submit our selves thereunto, is a signe of a gracious heart that is married to Christ.

Againe, a willing neffe to follow Christ in all conditions as he is discovered in the Word. To suffer Christ to have the soveraignty in our affections, above all other things and persons in the world. This is the right disposition of a true Spouse. For as it was at the first institution, there must be a leaving of Father and Mother, and all to cleave to the husband: so here, when any thing and Christ cannot stand together, or else we shall never have the comfort of this sweet Name. Many men will be glad to own Christ to be great by him; (but as Saint Auftin complaines in his time) Chrift Ieis not loved for lefus his own fake, but for other things that he brings with him, peace, plenty, &c. as farre as it stands with these contentments; if Christ and the world part once, it will be known which we followed. In times of peace this is hardly difcerned. If he will pay mens debts, fo as they may have the credit and glory of the Name to be called Christians: If he will redeeme them from the danger of finall is well; but onely fuch

The right di Position of the Spoufe of Christ

Vix diligitur lefm propter le fum.

E 2

have

SERM. II.

have the comfort of shis Communion, as love him for himselfe. Let us not so much trouble our selves about fignes, as be carefull to doe our duty to Christ, and then will Christ discover his love clearly unto us.

Use 4.
Encouragemet
and direction
for such as are
not yet in
Christ.

Now they that are not brought so near to this happy condition by Christ, may yet have this encouragement; there is yet place of grace for them, let them therefore consider but these things:

1. The excellency of Christ, and of the state of the

Church, when it is sonear him.

2. The necessity of this to be so near him.

3. That there is hope of it.

There is in Christ what soever may commend a Husband, birth, comelinesse, riches, friends,

wisedome, authority, &c.

The excellency of this condition to be one with Christ, is that all things are ours. For he is the King, and the Church, the Queene of all; all things are serviceable to us: it is a wondrous nearnesse to be nearer to Christ then the Angels, who are not his body, but servants that attend upon the Church: the Bride is nearer to him then the Angels, for be is the Head and Husband thereof, and not of the Angels. What an excellent condition is this for poore shell and bloud that creeps up and downethe earth here despised?

But especially, If we consider the Necessity of it, we are all indebted for more then we are worth; to divine justice we owe a debt of obedience, and in want of that we owe a debt of punishment and

2.

Heb. 2. 16.

Ibarve gathered my Myrrb, Uc.

63

we cannot answer one for a thousand. What will become of us if we have not a husband to difcharge all our debts but to be imprisoned for

ever?

A person that is a stranger to Christ, though he werean Achitophel for his braine a Indus for his profession, a Saul for his place : yet if his fins be fet before him, he will be swallowed up of despaire, fearing to be thut up eternally under Gods wrath: therefore if nothing elfe move, yet let ne-

ceffity compell us to take Christ.

Confider not onely how furable and how neceffary he is unto us, but what hope there is to have him, when as he fueth to us by his meffengers, and woeth us, when as we should rather feeke to him, and with other messengers sendeth a privy messenger, his Holy Spirit, to encline our hearts; let us therefore as we love our foules, fuffer our selves to be won. But more of this in

another place. The next Branch is,

3. Christs acceptation, I have gathered my mysrh with my Spice, &c. So that together with Christs presence, here is a gracious acceptation of the provision of the Church, with a delight init; and withall, a bringing of more with Him. The Church had a double defire: 1. That Christ would come to accept of what she had for him of his owne Grace which he had wrought in her foule. And 2. She was also verily perswaded that he would not come empty handed, only to accept of what was there, but also would bring abundance of Grace and comfort with him. Therefore, foe de-

SERM. II

3.

Chrift's accep.

E 3

Ibaregathered my Myrrb, Gc.

fires Acceptation and Increase: both which defires he answers. He comes to his Garden, shewes his acceptation, and withall he brings more. I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice : I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey : I have drunke my wine with my milke, &c. Whence we observe,

Observ.

That God accepts of the Graces of his children, and delights in them.

First, Because they are the fruits that come from his Children, his Spoule, his friend; love of the perfon wins acceptance of that which is presented from the person. What comes from love is lovingly taken.

2.

thing that is good, all comes from the Spirit, which is first in Christ our husband, and then in

They are the Graces of his Spirit. If we have any

Pfal. 133.

us. As the Oyntment was first powred on Aarons head, and then ran downe upon hir rich Garments: fo all comes from Christ to us. Saint Paul cals the wife the Glorg of her Husband, because (as in a glasse) the refembleth the Graces of her husband, who may fee his owne Graces in her: fo it is with Christand the Church; face answereth to face(as Solomon faith in another case) Christ sees his owne face, beauty, glory in his Church, the reflects his beames, he lookes in love upon her, and alwaies with his looks conveyes Grace and comfort; and the Church doth reflect back again his Grace. Therefore Christ loves but the reflection of his owne Graces in his Children, and therefore accepts them.

3. His kindnesse is such as he takes all in good

part, Christ is love and kindnesse it selfe. Why SERM. II. doth he give unto her the name of Spoule and Sifter ! but that he would be kind, and loving, and that we should conceive so of him. We see then the Graces of Christ accepting of us, and what we doe in his strength. Both we our selves are sacrifices, and what we offer is a facrifice acceptable to God through him that offered himself as a facrifice of fweet fmelling favour, from which God fmels a favour of rest. God accepts of Christ first, and then of us, and what comes from us in him. We may boldly pray, as P(.20.3. Lord remember all our offerings, and accept all our facrifices. The bleffed Apostle Saint Paul doth will us, to offer up our felves a holy and acceptable Sacrifice to God, when we are once in Christ. In the Old Testament we have divers manifestations of this acceptation. He accepted the Sacrifice of Abel(as it is thought) by fire from Heaven; and fo Eliahs facrifice, and Solomons by fire. So in the New Testament, he shewed his acceptation of the Disciples meeting together, by a mighty wind and then filling them with the Holy-Ghoft. But now the declaration of the acceptation of our Persons, Graces, & Sacrifices, that we offer to him, is most in peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy. Ghoft, and from a holy fire of love kindled by the Spirit whereby our facrifices are burned. In the incense of prayer how many sweet spices are burned together by this fire of faith working by love, as humility, and patience in submitting to Gods will, hope of a gracious answer, holinesse, loveto others,&c.

Rom. 1 1. 1.

Act 2.1.

Seru. II.

If so be, that God accepts the performances and Graces (especially the prayers of his children) Let it be an Argument to encourage us, to be much in all holy duties. It would dead the heart of any man, to performe service, where it should not be accepted, and the eye turned aside, not vouchsafing a gracious looke upon it; this would be a killing of all comfortable endeavours. But when all that is good is accepted, and what is amisse is pardoned, when a broken defire, a cup of cold water shall not go unrespected, nay unrewarded, what can we defire more? It is infidelity which is dishonourable to God, and uncomfortable to our selves, that makes us so barren and sold in duties.

U/c 2,

Onely let our care be to approve our hearts unto Christ. When our hearts are right, we cannot but think comfortably of Christ. Those that have offended some great persons, are afraid when they heare from them, because they thinke they are in a flate displeasing to them: So a soule that is under the guilt of any fin, is fo farre from thinking that God accepts of it, that it lookes to heare nothing from him but some message of anger and displeasure. But one that preserves acquaintance, due distance, and respect to a great person, heares from him with comfort, before he breaks open a letter, or fees any thing, he fuppofesit comes from a friend, one that loves him. So as we would defire to heare nothing but good newes from heaven, and acceptation of all that we doe, let us be carefull to preferve our lelves

ina good estate, or else our foules will tremble Saru, II. upon any discovery of Gods wrath. The guilty conscience argues, what can God shew to me, being fuch a wretch. The heart of fuch an one cannot but misgive; as where peace is made it will fpeake comfort. It is faid of Daniel, that he was a men of Gods defires; and of Saint John, that Christ so loved him, that he leaned on his breft. Every one cannot be a Daniel, nor one that leans. on Christs bosome. There are degrees of favour and love; but there is no childe of God, but he is beloved & accepted of him in fome degree; but fomething of this before in the former chapter.

I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice; I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey &c.

That is, I have taken Contentment in try Graces, together with acceptation, there is a delight, and God not only accepts, but he delights in the graces of his children. All my delight (faith David) is in those that are excellent , but this is not all, Christ comes with an enlargement of what he finds.

Christ comes, and comes not empty, whenfoever he comes, but with abundance of Grace. If Saint Paul (who was but Christs instrument) could tell the Romanes, I bope to come to you in abundance of Grace and comfort, because he was a bleffed instrument to convey good from Christo the people of God, as a Conduit-pipe ! How much more shall Christ himselfe, where he is present come with Graces and comfort? Those that have communion with Christ therefore,

The di courfe of a guilty con-(cience.

have '

SERM. II.

Rev. 32.12.

have a comfortable communion, being fare to have it enlarged; for To bim that bath shall be given. It is not onely true of his last comming, (when he shall come to judge the quick and the dead) I come, and my reward is with me; but also of all his intermediate commings that are between: when he comes to the foule, he comes not onely to accept what is there, but ftill with his reward with him, the increase of Grace, to recompence all that is good with the increase thereof. This made his prefence so defired in the Gospell with those that had gracious hearts; They knew all was the better for Christ, the company the better, for he never left any house, or table where he was but there was an increase of comfort and of Grace. And as it was in his Perfonall, so it is in his Spiritual presence, he never comes, but he increales Grace and Comfort.

Exbortation to bave Communion with Christ-

Therfore, let us be ftirred up to have communion with Christ (by this motive) that thus we may have an increase of a further measure of grace. Let us labour to be such as Christ may delight in, for our Graces are Honey and Spices to him; and where he tasks sweetnesse, he will bring more with him. To him that overcommeth, he promise the hidden Mannab; they had Mannah before, but he meanes they shall have more abundant communion with me, who am the hidden Mannah. There is abundance in him to be had, as the soule is capable of abundance. Therefore we may most fruitfully and comfortably be conversant in holy exercises, and communion with

Rey. 2.17.

SERW. II.

Why Grace is fet foreb by :

Hony of Wine

Gen.14.12.

with Christ, because our soules are fit to beenlarged more and more, till they have their fulneffe in heaven and ftill there is more Grace and Comfort to be had in Christ, the more we have to deale with him.

But to come to flew what is meant by Honey and Wine, &c. not to take uncertain grounds from these words, but that which may be a foundation for us to build comfort and instruction on ; we will not flew in particular what is meant by wine and Honey, for that is not intended by the Holy-Ghost; but shew in generall, how acceptable the Graces of the Spirit of Christ are to him, that they feed him, and delight him, as hony and wine do us, because in the covenant of grace he filleth us by his Spirit of Grace, to have comfort in us as we have in him : For, except there be a mutuall joy in one another, there is not communion. Therfore Christ furnisheth his Church with so much Grace, as is necessary for a state of absence here, that may fit her for communion with him for ever in heaven. As I faac fent Rebeckah before the marriage, jewels, and ornaments to weare, that the might be more lovely when they met : So our bleffed Saviour he fends to his Spoule from heaven, jewels, and ornaments; that is, Graces wherewith adorned he may delight in her more and moretill the marriage be fulfilled. Therfore in this booke the Church is brought in delighting in Christ, and hein the Church. Thy tove (faith the Churchto him) is sweeter then wine. Christ faith to the Church againe, Thy love

SER. II.

is sweeter then wine. Whatsoever Christ saith to the Church, the Church saith backe against to Christ, and he backe against to the Church; so there is a mutuall contentment and joy one in another.

Eat O friends, drinke, &c.

That all are firredup to rejoyce in the Graces of the Church Here is an Invitation, when he comes stored with more Grace and comfort, he stirs them up; both the Church, others, and all that beare good will to his people, that they would delight in the Graces and comforts of his Church. Whence observe, That,

Objerv.

We ought torejoyce in the Comforts and Graces of others, and of our lelves.

He stirreth up the Church here as well as others, for he speakes to all, both to the Church, and the friends of it, he had need to stir her up to enjoy the comfort of her owne Grace; for they are two distinct benefits, to have Grace, and to know that we have it, though one Spirit worke both. The Spirit works Grace, and shews us thethings that God hath given us; yet sometimes it doth the one and not the other. In the time of desertion and of Temptation we have Grace; but we know it not right to comfort, but we feele it not. There is no comfort of a scret unknown treasure; but so it is with the Church, she doth not alwaye stake notice of her owne Graces, and the right she hath to comfort.

We have need to have Christs Spirit to belp us to know what good is in us. And indeed a Christian should not onely examine his heart for the evill that is in him, to he humbled, but what good

there

1 Cer. 2 11.

there is, that he may joy and be thankfull. And SERM. II. fince Christ accepts the very first fruits, the earnest, and delights in them, we should know what he delights in, that we may goe boldly to him, confidering, that it is not of our felves, but of Christ, what soever is graciously good. Therfore we ought to know our owne Graces, for Christ, when he will have us comfortable indeed, will discover to us what cause we have to rejoyce, and shew us what is the worke of his own Spirit, and our right to all comfort.

And for for others, we should not onely joy in our felves, and in our owne Condition, and Lot. but also in the happy condition of every good Christian. There is joy in heaven at the converfion of one finner. God the Father joyes to have a new Son. Godthe Son to fee the fruit of his owne Redemption, that one is pulled out of the state of damnation. And God the Holy-Ghoft, that he hath a new Temple to dwell in. The Angelsthat they have a new charge to look to, that they had not before, to joyne with them to praise God: fo there is joy in heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy-Ghost with the Angels joy at it: And all true hearted Christians joy in the graces one of another.

For I. God, Chrift, and the Holy-Ghoft have glory by it . 2 . The Church hath comfort by the increase of a Saint. 3. The prayer of a Christian adds new strength to the Church. What a happy condition is it, when Gods glory, the Churches comfort and strength, and our owne joy meettogether & So that we should all take notice of the Grace of God in others. We

That we ought to rejoyce in the graces of outer

Luk 15.10.

Reaf. I.

SERM. II.

We ought to take notice of the works of God in creation and providence; when we see plants. ftarres, and fuch like, or elfe we dishonour God. What then should we doe for his gifts and Graces in his children, that are above these in dignity, should we not take notice of what is gracioufly good, and praise God for it ? Thus they did for Ranks conversions they glorified God; for when they faw, that Paul of a Woolfe, was become not only asheep, but a shepheard and lea-

der of Gods flocke, they glorified God.

Gal.1.24.

So the beleeving Iewes, when the Gentiles were converted, they glorified God, that he had taken the Gentiles to be his garden and people. When Paul and others had planted the Gospell, and God gave the increase, the godly Iewes rejoyced at that good: So we that are Gentiles should rejoyce to heare of the conversion of the Iewes, and pray for it, for then there will be a generall joy when that is. Want of joy shewes want of grace. There is not a furer Character of a Saranicall and Cainish disposition, then to looke on the Graces of Gods children with a malignant eye : as Can who hated his brother, because his workes were better then his. Those that deprave the graces of God in others, and cloud them with diffraces, that they may not thine, and will not have the fweet owntment of their good names to spread, but cast dead flies into it, shew that they are of his disposition that is the accuser of the Brethren. It is a figne of the childe of the Devill; all that have grace in them, are of Christs and of the Angels

Angels disposition; They joy at the conversion SERM. III and growth of any Christians. Here such as they are stiled friends and Beloved; and indeed none but friends and beloved can love as Christ loves. and delight as Christ delights.



The third Sermon.

CANT. V. 1,2.

I am come intomy Garden, my Sifter, my Spoufe : I bave gathered my Myrrh with my Spice: I have eaten my honey combe with my hony: I have drunk my wine with my milke: Eat O friends, drink, yea, drinke abundantly, O Beloved! I fleep, but my heart waketh, erc.



T hath been shewed how Christ and the Church were feafting together. She intreated his company to come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant

fruits: Heaccording to her defire, was come, and not only feasted on the Churches provision, but also brought more with him. Christ taking walks in his Garden (that is, his Church, and every particular foul, which is as a fweet paradife for him to delight in) is much refreshed; and in witneffe of acceptance brings increase. What greaSER. III.

ter encouragement can we wish, then that we being by nature as the Earth, fince the fall accurfed, should be the soile of Christs delight, planted and watered by him, and that what we yeeld, should be so well taken of him. We are under so gracious a covenant, that all our fervices are accepted, not only our honey, but honey-combe; not only our mine, but our milke, our weake fervices as well as our strong, because the spirit which we have from him sweetnethall. As in nature there is one common influence from heaven; but yet variety of flowers, Violets, Roses, Gilly-flowers, Spices, all fweet in their feverall kind with a different kind of fweetnesse: so all graces have their beginning from the common influece of Christs Spirit, though they differ one from another, and are all accepted of the Father of Lights, from whence they come. Christ wonders at his owne grace, o woman great is thy faith, and Cant. 3 6. Who is this that commeth out of the wilderne Se like pillars of smoake, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the Merchant?

Let nor the weakest of all others be discouraged; Christ looks not to what he brings so much as out of what store; that which is least in quantity, may be most in proportion; as the Widowes mite was more in acceptance then richer offerings. A paire of tartle doves was accepted in the Law, and those that brought but goats baire to the

building of the Tabernacle.

The particulars here specified that Christ tooke delight in, and inviteth others to a further degree of delight in, are,

Myrrh

Iam. 1.17.

Mat. 15.28,

Luk.21.3. Levit.5 7. Exod 35.6. Myrrh and Spice, honey and honey-combe, milke:

SI. The fweetneffe pof grace and

Which shew, 2. The variety Spirituall Scomfort.

Myrrhe and Spices. 1. refresh the spirits, and 2. preserve from putresaction, which are therefore used in embalming. If the soule be not embalmed with grace, it is a noisome carrion soule, and as it is in it selfe, so whatsoever commeth from it is abominable.

Milke and Honey nourish and strengthen, and Wine increaseth spirits, and thereupon encourageth, and allayeth sorrow and cares. Give Wine to him that is ready to dye. The sence of the love of Christ is sweeter then wine, it banisheth seares, and sorrow and care.

From this mutuall delight between Christ and his Spouse, we observe next, that,

There is amusuall feasting betwixt Christ and his Church. The Church bringeth what she hath of his Spirit, and Christ comes with more plenty.

For there being so near a covenant between him and us, we are by his grace to performe all offices on our part, we invite him, and he inviteth us. There is not the meanest Christian in whom there is not somewhat to welcome Christ withall; but Christ sends his provision before, and comes (as we say) to his owne cost; he sends a spirit of faith, a spirit of love, a spirit of obedience. Some are content to invite others, but are loth to goe to others, as if it were against state: they would have wherewith to entertain Christ,

Prov. 31.6.

SER. III.

but are unwilling to be beholding to Christ.

2. Some are content to have benefit by Christ, as his righteons nessed to cover them, &c. but they desire not grace to entertaine Christ, but a heart truly gracious desireth both to delight in Christ, and that Christ may delight in it: It desireth gracetogether with mercy, holinesse with happines. Christ could not delight in his love to us, if we by his grace had not a love planted in our hearts to him. But to come to speak of this Feast.

We fee it pleafeth Christ to vaile heavenly matters with comparisons setcht from earthly things, that so he may enter into our soules the

better by our fenfes.

Christ maketh us a feast, amarriage feast, amarriage feast with the Kings Sonne, of all feasts the most magnificent. A feast first in regard of the choise rarities we have in Christ. We have the belt and the best of the best. Far things, and the marrow of fatnesse, wine, and wine on the lees refined that preserveth the strength. The comforts we have from Christ, are the best comforts, the peace, the best peace, the priviledges, the highest priviledges. His fleft crucified for us, to fatisfie divine justice, is meat indeed, his blood fred for us, is drinke indeed, that is the belt, the onely meat and drinke to refresh our foules, because these feed our foules, and that to eternal! life. The love of God the Father in giving Christ'o death, and Christs love in giving himself together with full contentment to divine in this giftif is that the foul especially feeds on What could Christ

Ifa.25.6,

1.

Toh. 6.55.

RIV

give better then himfelfe to feed one hethought Shit. HI2 nothing elfe worthy for the foule to feed on and this it daily feeds on, as daily guilt rifeth from the breakings out of the remainder of corruption. Other dainties are from this, from becewe have the Spirit, and graces of the Spirit. If he giveth himself, will be not give all things with himself?

As Christ maketh a feast of choise things for his elect and choise Spoule, so there is variety as in a feast. Christ is made to me of God, Wisedome, Righteousnelle, Santification, and Redemption, that we should not be too much cast downe with thought of our owne folly, guilt, unholineffe, and mifery. There is that in Christ which answereth to all our wants, and an all-fufficiency for all degrees of happineffe. Therefore he hath termes from whatfoever is glorious, and comfortable in heaven and earth. Christis all marrow, all fweet. neffe; all the feverall graces and comforts we have, and the severall promises wherby they are made over and conveyed unto us, are but Christ dished out in severall manner, as the need of every Christian hall require. Christ himselfe is the Ocean, issuing into severall streames, to refresh the city of God. We can be in no condition, but we have a promife to feed on, and all promifes are Yea and Amen made to us in Christ, and performed to us for Christ.

Therefore as we have in Christ a feast for variety, fo for fufficiency of all good. No mangooth hungry from a feast. It was never heard for any to familh at a feast. In Christ there is not on-

1 Cor. 1 30.

SIR. HI.

Ioh.10.10.

Ioh.7.38.

Bph. 3.20.

ly abundance, but redundance, a diffusive and a foreading goodnesse. As in breasts to give milk, in clouds to drop downe showers, in the Sun to fend forth beames: As Christ is full of grace and truth, so he fully dischargeth all his offices. There is an overflowing of all that is good for ourgood. He that could multiply bread for the body, he can multiply grace for our foule : If he giveth life, he giveth it in abundance . If he giveth water of life; he givethrivers, not small ftreames : If he giveth peace and joy, he giveth it in abundance, his scope is to fill up our joy to the full. As he is able, so is be willing to do for us far more abundantly then we are able to thinks or feake, Where Christ is present he bringeth pleaty with him. If wine be wanting at the first, he will rather turne water into wine, then there should be a faile.

4

In a feaftchere is variety of friendly company: fo here friends are stirred up to refresh themselv's with us. We have the blessed Trinity, the Angels and all our fellow members in Christ to come with us.

There is no envy in spirituall things, wherein whatsoever the one hath, the other hath not the leffe.

5.

In a feast because it is intended for rejoycing, there is musicke, and what musicke like to the sweet harmony between God reconciled in Christand the soule, and between the soule and it selfe in inward peace and joy of the Holy-Ghost, shedding the love of Christ in the soule. We doe not onely joy, burglery under hope of glory.

glory, and in afflictions, and in God nowas ours, in whom now by Christ we have an interest. When we come forrowfull to this feaft, we depart chearfull. This as Davids Harp fills all paf-

fions and distempers of spirit.

The founder and mafter of the feast is Christ himselfe, and withall is both guest and banquet and all. All graces and comforts are the fruits of his Spirit, and he alone that infused the soule, can fatisfie the foule; he that is above the conscience, can only quiet the conscience, he is that misedome that fends forth maids, his Ministers to invite to his feast. It is he that cheereth up his guests as here. Those that invited others, brought ovntment and powred it out upon them, to shew their welcome, and to cheare them up:as may appeare by our Saviours speech to the Pharisee that invited him. So we have from Christ both the oyle of grace, and oyle of gladnesse; be creates the fruits of the lips to be peace, speaking that peace and joy to the heart that others doe to the eare. Heraifeth Pastors according to his owne beart, to feed his sheep.

The veffels wherein Christ conveyeth his dainties, are, the ministery of the Word and Sacraments, by the Word and Sacraments we come to enjoy Christ, and his comforts and graces, and by this feast of grace we come at length to the feast of feasts, that feast of glory, when we shall be fatisfied with the image of God, and enjoy fulneffe of pleafures for evermore; and which addesto the fulneffe, we shall fully know that it

shall be a never interrupted joy.

San.III. Rom. 6.4.3.2.

Prov. 9 3.

Luk.7.44.

Ifa. 57.19.

Ier. 3.15.

Sen. III.

Phil-4.4

Phil.4.4.

Ioh.15.33.

We see then that we cannot please Christ better then in shewing our felves welcome by cheerfull taking part of his rich provision. It is an honour to his bounty to fall too, and it is the temper of spirit that a Christian aimes at, to rejoyce alwaies in the Lord, and that from enjoyning our priviledges in him. We are not bidden to mourne alwayes, but to rejoyce alwayes, and that upon good advisement, rejoyce, and I fay againe (faith Saint Paul) rejoyce. Indeed we have causes of mourning, but it is that the feed of joy should be fowne in mourning, and we can never be in fo torlorne a condition, wherein if we understand Christ and our selves, we have not cause of joy. In me (faith Christ) ye shall have peace. The world will feed us with bread of affliction. If the world can help it, we shall have forrow enough, and Christ knowes that well enough, and stirs us up to a cheerfull feeding on that he hath procured for us. He hath both will and skill, and power, and authority to feed us to everlasting life; for the Father fent him forth, and lealed him to that purpose. All the springs of our joy are from him.

Our duty is to accept of Christs inviting of us, what will we do for him if we will not feast with him; we will not suffer with him, if we will not feast with him. Happy are they that come, though compelled by crosses and other sharp wayes. If we rudely and churlishly refuse his feast here, we are like never to tast of his feast hereafter. Nothing provokes so deeply as kindnessed despited. It was the cause of the sewes re-

jection.

jection, How hall we escape, not if we persecute, but if we doe but neglett fo great falvation.

That which we should labour to bring with us, is a tafte of these dainties, and an appetite to them. The foule hath a tast of its owne, and as all creatures that have life, have a tast to relish and distinguish of that which is good for them from that which is offensive: so where soever spiritual! life is, there is likewise a tast surable to the sweet relish that is in spirituall things. God should lose the glory of many excellent creatures, if there were not severall senses to discerne of severall goodnesses in them: so if there were not a tast in the foule, we could never delight in God, and his rich goodnesse in Christ.

Taft is the most necessary sence for the prefervation of the creature, because there is nearest application in taft, and that we should not be deceived in taft, we heare, see, and smell before, and if thefe fenfes give a good report of the object, then wetafteof it, and digeft it, and turne it into fit nourishment: so the spirit of man after judgement of the fitnesse of what is presented, rasts of it delights in it, and is nourished by it. There is an attractive drawing power in the foule, whereby every member fucks that out of the food that is convenient for it: fo the foule drawes out what is well digested by judgement, and makes it its owne for feverall uses.

The chiefe thing that Christ requireth, is a good stomacke to these dainties.

The meanes to procure an appetite. We are

San III Heb. 2.2.

Omnis vita en Au ducitur.

Sar. III.

firsto be sensible of spirituall wants and misery. The Passeover lamb was eaten with sowreherbs: fo Christ crucified, relisheth best to a soule affected with bitternesse of fin. Whilst men are rich in their owne conceit, they goe empty away; the duties and performances they trust too, are but husks, windy empty chaffe; fwelling is not kinde nourishment.

That which hinders the fharpnesse of the stomacke, are, cold defluxions, that dull and flat the edge of it: Soupon plodding upon the world, cold distillations drop upon the foule, and take away the favour and defire of heavenly things. These things fill not. There is both a vanity of emptineffe, and a vanity of short continuance in them. Why flould we lay out our money, fpend our time, our wits, our endeavour fo much about themsthis makes so many flarvelings in religion.

Besides, there be other noysome affections to be purged, as I Pet. 2. I which breed a diffaft and disaffection to spiritual things; as medies and guile, &cc. How can Christ be sweer to that foule

unto which revenge is fweer.

Exercise quickens appetite. Those that exercife themselves unto godlinesse, see a need of spiritual strength to maintaine duty. A dull formalif keeps his round, and is many yeares after where he was before; fees no need of further growth or strength. A Christian life managed as it should be indeed, as it hath much going out, fo it must have much comming in, it will not els be kept up. Those that have a journey rogoe, will

16.55

refresh themselves for afterward, left they faint San. IIE by the way.

Company likewise of such as labour for that blefed food that endureth to life eternall, provoketh to fall too as the rest doe, especially if they be equall or go beyond us in parts; for we will reafon with our felves, have not I as much need as they, if these things be good for them, then they

Ich. 6.17.

are good for me?

Thus Saint Paul foretelleth, that the example of the Gentiles should provoke the Iewes to Rom. 11.1. come in, and tafte of the Banquet Christ hath provided for both. Especially this should fir us up earneftly to take our part in that Christ hath provided; because we know not how soone the table may be taken away : when men fee the dishes in removing, though before they have difcourfed away much time of their supper, yet then they will fall fresh to it. We know not how long wisedome will be inviting of us, it will be our wisedome to take our time, least we put off fo long, as wisedome her selfe laughs at our destruction, and a famine be sent, of all famines the most milerable, a samine of the Word, and then we may pine away eternally without comfort. Christ will not alwaies stand inviting of us, if we will none of his cheare, others will, and shall when we shall starve.

Let this draw us on, that we fee here Christs hearry and free welcome, the gracious look that wearelike to have from him. He courses ir an honour, fince he bath made fuch rich provision for

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3 Kin, 4.6.

us to take part, and for our part shew our unwillingnesse, that fuch free kindnesse should be refused. We cannot honour his bounty more then to feed liberally of that he liberally fees before us. We are glad to perceive our friends upon invitation to thinke themfelves welcome. Let us open our mouth wide, fince Christ is foready to fill it, we are not streightned in his love, but in our own hearts. The widdowes oyle failed not till her vessels failed. We are bidden to delight in the Lord, and in whom should we delight, but where all fulneffe is to be had to delight in? Our spirits are not fo large as those bleffed comforts are, which we are called to the enjoyment of. If the capacity of our foules were a thousand times larger, yet there is so large a sea of comfort in Christ, asthey are not able to comprehend it : A tafte of these good things breed joy unspeakable, and peacethat paffeth under standing, what will the fulneffe doe ? This tafte we feele in the ordinances will bring us to that fulneffe hereafter. O let us keep our appetite for these things which are fodelightfull, fofurable to the foule. How great is that goodnes which he both layes up for hereafter, and layes out for his, even here in this life.

Phil.4.7.

In some ages of the Church, the feasts that Christ hath made have been more folemne and sumptuous then in other, thereafter as Christ hath been more or lesse clearly and generally manifested. At Christs first comming there was a greater feast then before; because the riches of Godslove in Christ were then laid open, and the

pale of the Church was enlarged by the com. SER.III. ming in of the Gentiles: fo will there be a royall feast when the Iewes shall be converted. Blefed Rev. 19.9. then shall those be that shall be called to the Supper of the Lamb. Suppers are in the end of the day. and this Supper shall be furnisht towards the end of the world.

But then will be the true magnificent fupper, when all that belong to Gods election shall meet together, and feed upon that heavenly Manna for ever : then there will be nothing but marrowit selfe, and wine without all dregs; in all our contentments here, there is some mixture of the contrary: then nothing but pure quinteffence. In the meane time he lets fall some Manna in this our wildernesse, he lets us relish that now; it will not putrifie as the other Manna did, but endure, and make us endure for ever. Its the true bread of life.

Marke how Christ drawes his Spouse on to drinke, and drinke abundantly, there is no danger of taking too much: where the fpring is infinite, we can never draw thefe wels dry, never fucke these breasts of consolation too much, and the more frong and chearfull we are, the better fervice we shall performe, and the more accepted: delight is as fugar, fweet in it felf, and it fweetens all things els. The joy of the Lord is our ftrength. Duties come off more gracefully, and Religion is made more lovely in the eyes of all, when it comes forth in strength and cheerfulnes, Christs house-keeping is credited hereby. In our Fathers house is plenty enough. When the Martyrs had drunkel

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drunke largely of this wine, it made them forget friends, riches, honours, life it selfe: the joy stirred up by it, carried them through all torments.

If any be hindred by conceit of unworthines, if affected deeply with it, let them confider what kind of men were compelled to the banquet, the blind, the lame. See a lively picture of Gods mercy inthe example of the Prodigall, he feares sharp chiding, and the Father provides a rich hanquet; he goeth to his Father, but the Father runs to meet him. Did Christ ever turne backeany that came unto him, if they came out of a true sense of their wants?

Est O friends.

Christ out of the largenesse of his affections multiplyeth new titles and compellations & Beloved and friends] Chrift provides a banquet, and invites his friends not his enemies. Those good things that weither eye bath feen, nor eare hath heard; that are above our conceit to apprehend, these are prowided for those that love him not that hate him : be mingles another cup for them, a cup of wrath, and they are to drinke up the very dregs of it. Friendflip is the fweetnesse, intimatenesse and strength of love. In our friends our love dwels, and refts it felf. Conjugall friendship is the sweetest friendthip. All the kinds and degrees of friendship meet in Christ towards his Spouse; it is the friendship of a husband, of a brother, and if there be any relation in the world wherein friendship is, all is too little to expresse the love of Christ.

In friendship there is mutuall consent, an union

Lak. 15.

4 Cor.s.e.

Pfal .. 79.8.

of judgement and affections, there is a mutuall San. IN. sympathy in the good and ill one of another, as if there were one foule in two bodies : there be mutual friends and mutuall enemies. Do I not hate Plal 139.21. them (faith David) that hate thee. There is mutuall love of one another for their owne fakes; in flattery men love themselves most : in semblance love others, but all is in reflection to themselves.

There is liberty which is the life of friendship, there is a free intercourse between friends, a free opening of lecrets : fo here Christ openeth his fecrets to us, and we to him, we acquaint him with the most hidden thoughts of our hearts, and we lay open all our cares and defires before him: thus Abraham was called Gods friend, and the Disciples Christs friends. It is the office of the Spirit to reveale the fecrets of Chrisheart to us concerning our owne falvation : he doth not reveale himselfe to the world.

In friendship there is mutuall solace and comfort one in another. Christ delighteth himselfe in his love to his Church, and his Church delighteth her selfe in her love to Christ. Christs delight was to be with the fons of men, and ours isto be with him.

In friendship there is a mutuall honour and respect one of another; but here is some difference in this friendship; for though Christ calls us friends, and therein in some fort bringshimselfe down to us, yet we must remember that this is a friendship of unequals: Christs honouring of us is his putting honour uponus, our honoring of him SER. III.

is the giving him the honour due to his name. This friendship must be maintained by due respect on our parts. As he is our friend, so he is our King, and knows how to correct us if we forget our distance. If he here seeme to use us hardly, it is that he may use us the more kindly after: he suffers much for us, therefore we may well allow him the liberty of seasonable correcting of us.

He that inspireth friendship into others, will undoubtedly keep the lawes of friendship him-felfe, will count our enemies his enemies. The enemies of the Church shall one day know that

the Church is not friendleffe.

And as his friendship is sweet, so constant in all conditions; he useth not his friends as we doe slowers, regard them onely when they are fresh; but he breeds that in us, that may make us such as he may still delight in us; if other friends faile (as friends may faile.) yet this friend will never faile us: If we be not assumed of him, he will never be assumed of us. How comfortable would our life be, if we could draw out the comfort that this title of friend affoordeth: It is a comfortable, a fruitfull, an eternal! friendship.

I fleep but my beart waketh.

Here the Church expressent a changeable passage of her spiritual condition, after the had recovered her selfe out of a source describe, had recovered her selfe out of a source describe, and enjoyed a comfortable intercourse with Christ, now she salleth into a deeper describe and temptation, from the remainder of corrup-

tion getting strength. The Church now falleth Sea. HI. afleep, then was awake in the night, and fought her beloved; here is no present awaking, no seekingsthere no misusage by the watchmen as here; there the findeth him more speedily, here the fals ficke with love before Christ discovereth himfelfe.

Before we come to the words, observe ingenerall.

That the state of the Church and every Christian is Subject to Spirituall alterations. The Church is alwaies beloved, a foufe, a friend; but in this one flate there falleth out variety of changes. No creature subject to so many changes as man; from a state of innocency he fell into a flate of corruption: from that he by grace is restored to a stare of grace, and from grace to glory, where his condition shall be as Christs now is, and as the heaven the place is, altogether unchangeable. And in that state of grace, how many intercourses be there, the foundation of Gods love tous, and grace in us alwaies remaining the same, once beloved, for ever beloved.

We fee here after a feast the Church falleth effeep: See irin Abraham, fomtimes frong in faith, fomtimes fearfull. David sometimes standing, fomtimes falling, fomtimes recovering himfelf, & Standing faster, somtimes triumphing, the Lord is the light of my countenance, whom shall I feare. formines againe, I fall one day fall by the hands of Said. In the very fame Pfalme he begins with, Rebuke me not inthy wrath, and ends with, Array

Observ. I.

Pfal. 27.1. 1 Sam. 27.1. Pfal.6.

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ge micked. Elias, though zealous, yet after files for bis life. So Iob, Peter, sometimes resolute and valiant, otherwhile links for feare.

The Reafon.

The ground is by reason of variety of outward occurrences working upon the divertity of principles in us, nature and grace, both nature and grace are alwaies active in us in some degree, when corruption gets strength, then we finde a ficke ftate creeping upon us, and lofe our former frame. It's with the foule as with the body; in a certaine period of time it gathereth ill humours which breake out into aguish distempers at length: fo the reliques of a spirituall disease not carried away, will ripen and gather to a head. This should teach us when we are well to study to keep an even course, and to watch over the first stirrings; and likewife if we see some unevennesse in our wayes, not to censure our selves or others over-harshly. Exact evennesse is to be striven after here, but to be enjoyed in another world.

Objerv.3.

a. Wee see by comparing the state of the Church here with the state of it in the third Chapter, that where corruption is not throughly purged, and a carefull watch kept over the soule, there after a recovery will follow a more dangerous distemper, corruption will not onely strive for life, but for rule. If there had been a through reformation in the Church after her former trouble, and a through closing with Christ, she would not thus have fallen into a more dangerous condition. We see David in his latter times fals to

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done great services for the Church, at length shamefully betrayes his strength; and he that had ruled others, submits to be ruled by a base strumpet. Ionas for not through repenting for his running from his calling, fals after to quarrell with God himselfe. It is the best therefore to deale throughly with our hearts, else sies unsubdued will owe us a greater shame, we shall dishonor our owne beginnings. Yet this is the comfort, that this will occasion deeper humility and hatred of sinne in those that are Gods, and a faster cleaving to God than ever before, as we see in the Church here: afterwards grace will have the better at last.

3. We may observe the ingenuity of the Church in laying open her owne state. It is the disposition of Gods people to be ingenuous in opening their state to God, as in David, Nehemiah, Ezra, &c.

The reason is thus:

1. By a free and full confession we give God the honour of his wisedome in knowing of our own condition secret and open, we give him the honour of mercy that will not take advantage against us, the honour of power and authority over us, if he should shew his strength against us. We yeeld unto him the glory of all his chiefe prerogatives: whereupon Ioshuah moveth Achan to a free confession, My son, give glory to God.

2. We shame Satan, who first takes away shame of finning, and then takes away shame for

Observ.3.

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fin, he tempts us not to be ashamed to do that we are ashamed to confesse: so we by silence keep Satans counsell against our owne soules. If we accuse our selves, we put him out of office, who is the accuser of the brethren.

3. We prevent likewise malicious imputations from the world. Austin answered roundly and well when he was upbraided with the sinnes of his former age: what, thou (faith he) findest fault with, I have condemned in my selfe before.

4. This ingenuous dealing eafeth the foule, giving vent to the griefe of it whiles the arrowes head sticks in the wound it will not heale: Sinne unconfessed is like a broken peece of rusty yron in the body, it must be gotten out, else it will by ranckling and festing cause more danger. It is like poison in the stomacke, if it be not presently cast up it will infect the whole body. Is it not better to take shame to our selves now, than to be assamed hereafter before Angels, Devils and Men. How carefull is God of us, by this private way to prevent suture shame?

5. This faithfull dealing with our felves is ofta meanes of present delivery out of any trouble. David in the 32. Psalme 4. was in a great distemper both of body and spirit; his moisture was turned into the drought of Summer. It is thought he made this Psalme between the time of his sin and his pardon. What course taketh he? I said (saith he) that is, I resolved to confesse my sin, and thou sorgavest the iniquity of my sin. Upon a free and full, a faithfull, and ingenuous confession.

Que ta reprebendu, ego damnavi.

Ferrum in vu!-

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on, without all guile of firit, he found ease pre fently both in soul and body. The cause of Gods severe dealing with us, is, that we should deale severely with our selves. The best tryall of Religion in us, is by those actions whereby we restect on our selves, by judging and condemning of our selves; for this argueth a spirit without guile. Sin and shifting came into the world together. The subtilty of proud nature, especially in eminency is such, that sinnes may passe for vertues; because sinne and Satan are alike in this, they cannot endure to appeare in their owne colour and habit; and so those that oppose it shall be accounted opposers of good. This guile of Spirit hath no blessednesse belonging to it, take heed of it.

4. Marke further one figne of a gracious soule, to be abased for lesser defects, sleepinesse and indisposition to good. One would thinke drowsinesse were no such great matter; O but the church had such sweet acquaintance with Christ, that every little indisposition that hindered any degree of communion was grievous to her. You shall have a sudas, a Saul, an enormious offender confesse great fals that gripe his conscience; all shall be cast up, that the conscience being disburdened may feele a little ease: But how few have you humbled for dulnesse of spirit, want of love, of zeale, and cheerfulnesse in duty: This accompanied with strife against it, argues a good spirit indeed.

A carnall man is not more humbled for groffe fins, than a gracious Christian for wants in good

G 2

actions,

actions, when it is not with him as it hath been, and as he would. The reason is, where there is a cleare and heavenly light, there leffer motes are difcernable : and [piritual] life is fenfible of any obaruction and hinderance. This goeth in the world for unnecessary nicety: the world strainethnot at these gnats: But those upon whose hearts the Sun of Righteoufresse hath shined, have both a cleare fight and a tender heart.

To come to the words [I fleep] The Church fetcheth a comparison from the body to expresse the state of the soule. It is one use of our body to help us in spirituall expressions. Whilst the foule dwelleth in the body, it dependeth much in the conceiving of things upon the phantafie, and the phantafie upon the senses. Wee come to conceive of spirituall sleep by sleep of the body, which we are well enough acquainted with.

The Church as the confifts of a double principle, flesh and spirit mingled together in all parts, as darknesse and light in the twilight and dawning of the day: so here the expresser her condition in regard of either part, fo far as the was carnall, the flept, fo far as the was formuall, the was awake.

In this mixt condition, the flesh for the prefent prevailed, yet fo as the Spirit had its working, the flept, but her heart waked.

The words containe a confession, I steep, and a correction, but my beart water b. She hath a double afpect; one to the ill the fleeping the other to

her good, her heart in some degree awaked. The SER. IIL Spirit of God is a difcerning Spirit, it discovereth what is fieth and what is Spirit.

So that we must not conceive this sleep to be that dead fleep all men are in by nature, nor to be that judiciall fleep, that spirit of flumber which is a further degree of that natural! fleep, to which God giveth up some as a seale of their desperate condition; but here is meant that sleep that ariseth out of the remainder of corruption unsubdued, and now is here in the Church prevailing over the better part. Flesh and Spirit have both their intercourse in us as, Moses and Amalek had : unleffe we frand upon our guard, the flesh will get the upper ground, as we fee here. The best are no further safe than they are watchfull.

For the cleare understanding of this, observe fome correspondency in the resemblance, wherin too much curlofity is lothfome and postilllike, and calleth the mind too much from the

kernell to the shell.

Bodily and spirituall sleep resemble each the other in the causes, in the effects, and in the dan-

gerous iffue.

The fleep of the body commeth from the obfiruction and binding up of the fenses by vapours which trifeout of the stomacke: so there be spirituall fumes of worldly cares and defires that obstruct the senses of the soule; therefore our bleffed Saviour counts it a spirituall surfetting, when the foule is oppreffed with care about the world; luftsbring the foulea bed Profperity is a Luk.21.34.

The refem. blance between bodily and spiritual fleep.

G 3

ftrong

92	1 fleep.
BR. III.	ftrong vapour, if it overcome not the braine, yet
	it weakeneth it as strong waters doe. See it in So-
2.	lomon himselfe. The Disciples fell asleep in the
	garden when they were oppressed with heavi-
	nesse and forrow, which passions will have the
1	like effect upon the foule.
3.	Sleep arifeth oft from wearinesse, and want of
	fpirits : fo there is a spirituall wearinesse arising
	from discouragements, and too much expence
	of the strength of the soule upon other matters,
	upon impertinencies that concerne not the best state of the soule.
4	
4.	Some are brought afleep by muficke: so many by flattering enticements and infinuations of
	others joyning with their owne flattering de-
	ceitfull heart, are cast into a spiritual sleep.
5.	Sleep arifeth from want of exercise, when
	there is a cellation from spirituall exercise about
	the proper object of it, there followeth a spiritu-
	all fleep. Exercise keeps waking.
6.	Sleep ariseth oft from cold diseases, as Lethar-
485 373	gies, from cold groffe humors; cold, earthly,
10.50	groffe affections about the things here below, be-
	numme the foule, and bring it into a heavy,
14	drowfie, fleepy temper.
7•	Sometimes fleep is caused by some kind of
	poyfon, especially the poyfon of Aspes which
	kils in fleeping: and doe not finfull delights doe the like to the foule infentible evils are the most
	the like to the louie intentible evils are the most
10	dangerous evils.
8.	Otherwhile flothfull yawning company dif-
	poseto sleep, there is no more ordinary cause of
2000 A 4 1	i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i

S

spirituall sleep, than conversing with spirituall Sun. 111. fluggards, that count it a high point of wiscdome not to be forward in Religion. These formall proud persons, as they are cold themselves, so they labour to cast water upon the heat of others. Nay those that are other wise good, if declining in their first love, will encline others to afellowship in the same secure temper, lest they should

They are alike in the effects. Men disposed to be afleep defire to be alone. Those likewise that are disposed to take a spiritual nap, will avoid company, especially of such as would awake them. They will hardly endure rowzing

be upbraided by the vigilancy of others.

meanes.

Men will draw the curtains and shut out light, when they mean to compose themselves to rest. So when men fayour themselves in some wayes not allowable, they are afraid to be disquieted by the light; light both discovereth, awaketh, and firs up to working: And men when they are loth to doe what they know, are loth to know what they shouldidge. They that sleep, sleep in the night. Ala, otherwise a good King, thur up the Prophet in prison for doing his duty: Much of the anger that men beare against the word layd open to them, is because it will not suffer them to fleep quietly in their fins. Such as will fuffer them to live quietly in their finnes, they are the quiet and honest men. There cannot be a worfe figne than when men will not endure wholfome words, it is a fignethey are in an ill league with

I Thef. 5.7.

fall likewise, if not their grace, yet the exercise of Sax. their graces, and are in danger to be robbed of 211.

There is no danger but a man in fleep is faire for, and exposed unto: Sifera was flaine afterpand Ishbosheth at noone day: and there is no temptation, no finne, no judgement, but a fecure drowfie Christian is open for; which is the ground of fel oft inforcing watchfulnesse by the Spirit of Godin the Scriptures. As spirituall deadnes of spirit isa caule of other fins, fo likewife itis a punifiment of them; God powreth a Spirit of dead fleep upon men, and closeth up their eyes, till some heavy judgement falleth upon them; and how many carnall men neverawake in this world, till they awake in hell? No wonder therefore that Saran labours to cast men into a dead fleep all that he can, and deludesthem with dreames of a falfe good, that their efface is good, and like fo to continue, that to morrow shall be as to day, that no danger is neare, though Gods wrath hangeth over their head, ready to be revealed from heaven.

Thus wee fee how the resemblance holds. Some apply this to Confrantines time about three hundred yeares after Christ, when the Church upon peace and plenry grew fecure, and fuffered Ecclefiafticall abuses to creep in. Religion begat plenty, and the daughter devoured the mother. This made the Writers of the Ecclesialticall Stories to quellion, whether the Church bath more burt by open perfecution, or peace, when

1 Sam.4.77

12c) au 4 % Ha.10.10.11 DO Sallizi

Theodor I. c.

SER. III.
Aug ad Ianuar. Bpift. 119.
Tolerabilior
Indeorum cenditto quam
nofira.

bi two tempore bec dicebas (O sapiens Augustine) quid nostra tempestate dixisses? Gerson de vit.spititual.

Si tenerentur in fuorigore, maxtma purs Ecclefie damnaretur.

one Christian undermineth and rageth against another. Humane inventions were fo multiplied, that not long after in Augustines time, he complained that the condition of the Iewes was more tolerable then theirs for though the lewes were under burdens, yet they were fuch as were imposed by God himselfe, and not humane presumptions. But Gerfon many hundred yeares after increaseth his complaint. If (O Augustine) thou faidstthus in thy time, what wouldest thou have faid if thou hadft lived now! when men (as a toy taketh them in the head) will multiply burdens. And he was not afraid to fay, that the number of humane constitutions was such, that if they were observed in rigour, the greatest part of the Church would be damned. Thus whileft the husbandman flept, the envious man Satan flept not, but few'd his teares. Thus Popery grew up by degrees, till it overspread the Church whilst the watchmen that should have kept others awake, fell afleep themselves. And thus we anfwer the Papists, when they quarrell with us about the beginning of their errours. They aske of us when such and such an herefie began : we answer, that those that should have observed them, were afleep. Popery is a mystery that crept into the Church by degrees under glorious pretences. Their errours had modelt beginnings. Worshipping of Images arose from referving the pictures of friends, and after that were brought into the Church. Invocation of Saints arose from some of the Fathers figurative turning

of their speech to some that were dead. Transub- | San. I stantiation had rife from some transcendent unwary phrases of the Fathers. The Papacy it selfe from some titles of the Romish Church and Bishop. Nothing in Popery so groffe, but had fome fmall beginnings, which being negleeted by those that should have watched over the Church, grew at length unfufferable. No wonder if the Papists be cast into a dead sleep, they have drunke too deep of the whores cup. They that worship Images, are (as the Scripture faith) like unto them, they have eyes and fee not, &c. They cannot discerne of their errours, though they be never fo ridiculous and fenfleffe, as prayer in an unknowne tongue, and fuch like.

And upon this state of the Church, let us adde

this caution.

If the best menbe so prone to sleep, then we cannot fafely at all times build upon their judgement. The Fathers of the Church were not alwayes awake. There be few of them, but in some things we may appeale from themselves sleeping, to themselves waking. The best having some darknesse left in their understandings, and fome lusts unsubdued in their affections, may write and speak sometimes out of the worst part and principle that is in them, as well as out of the best, when they keep not elose to the rule.

When our adversaries presse us with the authority of Fathers, we appeale to them where they speake advisedly, and of purpose. When they were not awaked by heretickes, they fpeak

A Caution,

fome-

San. III.

Patres in maximis sunt noftri, in multis vary, in minimis vefiri. Wh.

fometimes unworthily, and give advantages to heretickes that followed. It is the manner of our adversaries to make the unwarrantable practife of the ancienter time a rule of their practife, and the doubtfull opinions of the ancients their own grand tenets. Wherein in both they deale unsafely for themselves, and injuriously towards us, when we upon grounds in some things differt, which liberty (of when they should not) they will take to themselves.

But howfoever this fleepy condition agreeth to the former times of the Church, yet I wish there were not cause to apply it to our selves, in this latter age of the Church, wherein many of the ancient herefies are revived; and belides, the evils that accompany long peace, take hold of us, and will prevaile too far if we doe not rowze up our felves. The Church is in the Commonwealth, and usually they flourish and fall together. When there is a fleep of the Church, for the most part there is a sleep of the State. A civill fleep is, when in grounds of danger there is no apprehension of danger, and this sleep is a punishment of spirituals sleep, when with Ephraim a State hath gray haires, and knowethit not, when judgements abroad will not awake men; when noise and pinching will not awake, the sleep must needs be deep. The whole world almost is in combustion round about us, and many countries thought themselves as safe a little before their troubles, as we now thinke our felves. If feare of outward dangers will not awake, then

162,7.9.

foirinal dangers will not, as being more fecret & Swa. III. not obvious to fenfe. No wonder then if few will beleeve our report of the fearefull condition of wicked men in the world to come. A man may be startled and awaked with outward dangers that is foiritually fortifh; but he that is careleffe of outward danger, will be regardleffe of what we fav in foirituall dangers. The feare of danger may be the greater, when (as it was among ft the Iewes) those that should be watchfull themselves, and awake others, in stead of awaking, rocke the cradle, and cry, peace, peace, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord ; yet we must never forget to be mindfull with thankfolneffe for peace, and the Gospell of peace, which yet by Gods bleffing we enjoy, alwayes fulfering the readinesse of nature to grow secure under the abundance of favours, and fo to bleffe our felves in that condition.

1. Now we know that fleep is creeping upon us, by comparing our prefent condition with our former, when we are in a more wakefull frame, when the graces of Gods Spirit were in exercife in us. If we differ from that we were then all is not well.

2. Compare our felves againe with that flate and frame that a Christian should be in: for fometimes a Christian goes under an uncomfortable condition, all the dayes of his life, fo that he is not ficto make himfelfe his patterne. The true rule is, that description that is in the word of a waking and living Christian, wher should a man

Signes of a Deepy Rate. SER. III.

Acts 9.39.

be, take him at the best, the varying from that is a sleepy estate; as for instance, A Christian should walke in the Comfort of the Holy-Ghost, live and walke by faith, he should depend upon God, and resist temptations. Faith should worke by love, and love to our selves should move us to honour our selves as members of Christ, to disdaine to defile our selves by sinne: our hope if it be waking will purge us and make us sutable to the condition we hope for in Heaven, and the Company wee hope to have sellowship with there.

3. Again, looke to the examples of others that are more gracious. I have as many encouragements to be thankfull to God, and fruitfull: They enjoy no more meanes then I, and yet they abound in affurance, are comfortable in all conditions: I am downe in a little trouble, subject to passion, to barrennesse, and distrust, as if there were no promises of God made to sowing in righteousnesse. Thus a man may discerne he is asseep, by comparing himselfe with others that are better then himselfe.

4. Again, it's evident that we are growing onto a fleepy condition by this, when we find a backwardness to spiritual duties, as to prayer, thankf-giving, and spiritual conference. It should be the joy of a Christian (as it is his prerogative) to come into the presence of Christ, and to be inabled to doe that, that is above himselfer. When what is spirituall in a duty will not downe with us, it is a signe our soules are in a sleepy temper:

There is not a proportion between the foole and Ssa. III. the bufineffe in heavenly duties. Whom doe we speake too but God: whom do we heare speake in the Word but God ! what should be the temper of those that speake to God, and heare him speake to them: It should be regardfull reverent. observant: I hosethat are watchfull to the eye of a Prince, what observance they shew, when they are to receive any thing from him or to but up any request to him, offer this to thy King faith the Lord by Malachy: When a man comes drowfily to God, to facrifice, to heare, to pray, &c. Offer this carriage to man, will he take it at thy hands? Oh the mercy of our patient God, that will endure fuch fervices as we most frequently performe! by this indisposednesse to duty more or leffe, may we discover our sleepinesse.

5. When the foule begins to admire outward excellencies, when it awakes much to profits, pleasures and honours, when men admire great men, rich men, great places, the strength and fat of the foule is confumed by feeding on thefe things, fo that when it comes to spirituall things it must needs be faint and drowfie. By these and the like fignes, let us labour to fearch the state of our foules.

1. And to ftirre us up the more, Consider the danger of a fecure fleepy estate. There is no fin but a man is exposed unto in a secure estate; therfore the Devill labours all he can to cast men into this temper, which he must doe before he can make him fall into any groffe finne. When he

Mal. 1.8.

Mouves againft fleepineffe.

SER, III.

is afleep he is in a fit frame for any ill action, he is in a temper fit for the Devill to worke upon, to bring into any dreame or errour, to inflame the fancies and conceits with outward excellencies. The Devill hath a faculty this way to make outward things great that are nothing worth; and to make fuch fins little, as if we were awake would affright us; he works strongest upon the fancy, when the soule is sleepy or a little drowsic.

There is no man that comes to groffe fins suddenly, but he fals by little and little, first to slumber, and from slumber to sleep, and from sleep to security, and so from one degree to another: it is the inlet to all sinnes, and the beginning of all danger; therefore the Lord takes a contrary course with his, when he would preserve a state or person, he plants in them first a spirit of faith to believe that there is such a danger, or such a good to be apprehended, upon watching and going on in a course besitting that condition, and then faith (if it be a matter of threatening) stirs up feare, which maketh up care and diligence. This is Gods method, when he intends the preservation of any.

2. A man in his fleep is fit to lose all, a fleepy hand lets any thing goe with ease. A man hath grace and comfort, he lets it goe in his spiritual! fleepinesse, grace in a great measure, and the sense and comfort of it altogether. A Christian bath alwayes the divine nature in him that workes in some degree; yet notwithstanding in regard of his present temper and seeling, he may be in

fuch

fuch a case, that he shall differ nothing from a re- San. III. probate; nay, hee may come to feele more then any ordinary wicked man feeles whiles he lives in the world, as divers good Christians doc. And all this, through their carelefnesse, that they fuffer themselves to be robbed of first beginnings, by yeelding to delights, company and contentments; feeding their conceits with carnall excellencies, fo favouring corruptions, and flattering, that that is naught in them, they lose the comfort of all that is good : who would doe this for the gaining of a little broken fleep? I fay, broken fleep; for the better a man is, the more unquietly shall he sleep in such a state, he shall feele startlings and frights in the midst of his carnall delights if he belong to God.

3. Befides, God meets them with fome croffes in this world, that they shall gaine nothing by it. There is none of Gods children that ever gained by yeelding to any corruption, or drowfineffe, though God faved their foules. It is alwaies true, a secure state is a fure fore-runnner of some great croffe, or of some great sinne. God cannot endure such a temper of soule, livelesse and unfeeling performances and facrifices, to him that hathgiven us fuch encouragements: It must needs be distastefull to God when we goe drowfily and heavily about his worke. Curfed is he that doth the worke of the Lordnegligently, if it were to sheath his sword in the bowels of his enemy, to which man is exceedingly prone, yet if it be not done with diligence and an eye to God, a man is curfed in it. 4. And

Icr.48.10.

SAR. III.

Luk. 1.74

4. And it is an odious temper to God; for doth not hee deserve cheerfull service as our hands; hath he been a wildernesserous; doth he not deserve the marrow of our soules; doth not his greatnesse require it as our hands, that our senses be all waking; and doth not his mercy deserve, that our love should take all care to serve him that is so gracious and good to us; Is it nor the fruit of our redemption to serve him without seare in holinesse and rightcousnesses all the daies of our lives;

 It is a state not onely odious to God, but irksome to our owne spirits the conscience is never fully appeace in a drowse state, or in drowse

performances.

Likewise it is not gracefull to others, it breeds not love in them to good things, but dislike. Carnall men, let them see a Christian not carry himselse waking as he should, though they be a thousand times worse themselves, yet notwithstanding they thinke it should not be so, such a course doth not suce with so much knowledge

and fo much grace.

Let a man consider, wherefore God hath given the powers of the spirit, are they not given for exercise, and to be imployed about their proper objects? Aman is not a man, a Christian is not a Christian when he is not waking; he so far degenerates from himfelse, as he yeelds unto any enbetteming carriage. Wherefore hath God given us understanding, but to conceive the hell things: wherefore

have we judgement, but to judge aright between the things of heaven and earth? wherefore have we love planted in us, but to fet it on lovely objects! wherefore fath, butto trust God overall ? wherefore harred, but to fly ill ? wherefore have we affections, but for foiritual things? When therfore our affections are dull, and lose their edge to these things, being quick only to earthly things. What a temper is this ! how doth a man answer his Creation, the state of a new Creature? Wherforeare all graces planted in the foule, as faith and love, and hope and patience; but to be in exercise, and waking to have these, and to let them fleep, and lie unexercifed, fo far a Christian forgers himselfe, and is not himselfe, a Christian as a Christian, that is, in hisright temper should be in the act and exercise of what is good in him, upon all occasions, as we say of God, he is a pure Act, because he is alwaies in working. The Spirit of God is a pure Act, in whom is no fuffering, but all action, about that that is fit for foglorious a nature : So it is with the spirit of a man, that haththe Spirit of God; he is in act, in exercise, in operation: As the Spirit is more or leffe in him, fo he is more or leffe in operation, more or leffe fruitfull. What a world of good might Christians doe, if they were in a right remper; what a deale of ill might they escape and avoid that they lie in, if they would rouze up their foules to be as Christians should be, and as their soule and conscience telsthem, they ought and might be, did they rightly improve the meanes they have.

H a

THE

SER-HII.



The fourth Sermon.

CANT. V. VER. II.

I fleep , but my beart wakes , &c.



He words as it hath been shewed, containe a confession, I sleep, and a Correction, my beart waketh. The confession hath been handled, now something of the correction,

or exception.

The word heart you know includes the whole foule, for the under standing is the heart, an understanding heart. To lay things up in our hearts, there it is memory, and to cleave in heart is to cleave in will. To rejoyce in heart, that is, in the affection, so that all the powers of the foule, the inward man (as Paul calleth it) is the heart.

I sleep, but my heart waketh

Indeed, the Church might have faid, my heart fleepeth, but my heart waketh; for it is the fame faculty, the fame power of the foule, both in the flate of corruption, and of grace, in which the foule is, as in the twy-light, we cannot fay, this is

light

mixture. In all the powers of the foule there is fomething good, and fomething ill, fomething fl. sh, and somethingspirit. The heart was asseep, and likewise was a wake. I sleep, but my heart waketh. You see here then first of all in this corre-

Aion, That a Christian hath two principles in him, that which is good, and that which is evill, whence issueth the weaknesse of his actions and affections: They are all mixed, as are the principles from which they come forth. We may ob-

ferve further, That a Christian man may know how it is with himselfe, though he be mixed of

pernaturall principle, where there is this mixture, there the light of the Spirit searcheththe darke corners of the heart: A man that hath the Spirit knoweth both, he knoweth himselfe and his owne heart. The Spirit hath a light of its owne, even as Reason hath, how doth Reason know what it doth? By a research Ad inbred in the soul. Shall a man that is naturall research upon his state, and know what he knowes, what he thinks, what he doth, and may not the soule that is raised to an higher estate know as much? un-

light, and that is darkneffe, because there is such a San. HII.

Objerv. I.

Objerv.2.

flesh and spirit; he hath a distinguishing knowledge and judgement, whereby he knowes both the good and evill in himselfe. In a dungeon where is nothing but darknesse, both on the eye that should see, and on that which should be seen, he can see nothing; but where there is a su-

doubtedly it may. Befides, we have the Spirit of God, which is light, and felfs-evidencing, it H 2 flowers

San. IIII.

How the differning worke of
the Spirit commeth to be so interrupted,

fnewes unto us, where it is, and what it is. The work of the Spirit may sometimes be hindered, as in times of temptation, then I confesse a man may looke wholly upon corruption, and so mistake himselfe, in judging by that which he sees present in himselfe, and not by the other principle, which is concealed for a time from him. But a Christian, when he is not in such a temptation, he knowes his owne estate, and can distinguish between the principles in him, of the slesh and Spirit, grace and nature.

Againe we see here, in that the Church saith, but my heart waketh, that she doth acknowledge there is good as well as evill: As the Church is ingenious to confesse that which is amisse, I seep, so she is a strue in confession that which is good in her selfe; but my heart waketh, which yeelds us

another observation.

Objerv.3.

Wee should as well acknowledge that which is good, as that which is evill in our hearts.

Because we must not beare false witnesse (as not against others) much lesse against our selves. Many help Satan the accorder, and plead his cause against the Spirit their Comforter, in resuming to see what God seeth in them. We must make conscience of this, to know the good as well as the cyill, though it be never so little.

To come in particular, what is that good the Church bear confesser, when the faith, that her heart makesh ? She in ther sheepy chare, first hash her judgement found in that which is truth of

What the Church acknowledgeth in ber beart waking, though afleep.

persons,

persons, things, and courses. Christians are not so San. IIII benighted when they fleep, or given up to fuch a reprobate judgement, as that they discerne not differences: they can discerne that such are in a good way, and fuch are not; that fuch meanes are good, and fuch are not: A Christian oft times is forced to doe worke out of judgement, in case his affections are asleep or distracted, and fuch works are approved of God, as they come from a right judgement and conviction, though the evill of them be chastised.

But all is not in the judgement. The childe of a choice of God afleep hath a working in the will, choofing the better part which he will cleave too, he hath a generall purpole to please God in all things, and no fetled purpose in particular for to sleep thus: answerable to his judgement therefore he choofeth the better part and fide, he ownes God, and his cause, even in evill times, cleaving in resolution of heart to the best wayes, though with

weakneffe.

Take David in his fleepy time between his re. pentance, and his foule finne: If one should have asked him what he thought of the waies of God, and of the contrary, he would have given you an answer out of found judgement thus and thus: If you should have asked him what course he would have followed in his choice refolution and purpose, he would have answered savourly.

Againe, there remaineth affection answerable to their judgement, which though they finde, and feele it not for a time, it being perhaps feat-

good remalneth in the will

offection avwerable to their judgmen

tered.

SER. IIII. tered, yerthere is a fecret leveto Christ, and to his cause, and side, joyned with joy in the welfare of the Church and people of God, rejoycing in the prosperity of the righteous, with a fecret griefe for the contrary. The pulses will beat this way, and good affections will discover themselves, take him in his sleepy estate, the judgement is found in the main, the will, the affections, the joy, the delight, the forrow, this is an evidence his heart is awake.

Conficience,

Prov. 15.15.

How the con-(cience in a Reepy temper is knowne to te mate.

2 Sam. 24.

1 Sam. 2 2.

The conscience likewise is awake, the heart is taken oft times for the conscience in Scripture, a good confcience (called a merry heart) is a contimuall feast. Now the conscience of Gods children is never fo fleepy, but it awaketh in some comfortable measure, though perhaps it may be deaded in a particular act, yet notwithstanding there is so much life in it, as upon speech or conference,&c.therewill be an opening of it, and a veelding at the length to the strength of spirituall reason, his conscience is not seared; David was but a little rowled by Nathan, yet you fee how he prefently confessed ingeniously that he had finned: So when he had numbred the people, his conscience presently smore him; and when he resolved to kill Nabal and all his family, which was a wicked, and carnall paffion, in which there was nothing but flesh; yet when he was stopped by the advise, and the diferent counsel of Abiwe fee how prefently he yeelded. There is a kind of perpetuall rendernesse of conscience in Gods people; all the difference is, of more, or leffe. And

And answerable to these inward powers is the San JIH. outward obedience of Gods children, in their fleepy estate; they goe on in a course of obedience, though deadly and coldly, and not with that glory that may give others good example, or yeeld themselves comfort, yet there is a courfe of good duties, his ordinary way is good, howfoever he may step aside, his firs may be fleepy when his estate is waking. We must distinguish between a state and a fit, a man may have an aguish fit in a found body: The state of a Chriftian is a waking ftate in the inward man; the bie courses he falleth into are but firs our of which he recovers himselfe.

Whence for use, let us magnifie the goodnesse of God, that will remaine by his Spirit, and let it flay to preferve life in fuch hearts as oursare, lo prone to fecurity and fleepineffe, let it put us in mind of other like mercifull and gracious doings of our God for us that he gave his Spirit to us when we had nothing good in us; when it met with nothing but enmity, rebellion, and indisposednesse: Nay, consider how he debased himselfe and became man, in being united to our fraile flesh after an admirable pearnesse, and all out of mercy to fave us.

If fo be that Satan shall tempt us in such occafions, let us enter into our owne foules, and fearch the truth of Grace, our judgement, our wils, our confrant course of obedience, and the inward principle whence it comes, that we may be able to stand in the time of temptation. What upheld

So they retain also a course of obedience.

That we must diftinguish beiween flates and fits.

Se :: 18

San. III

the Church, but this reflect act by the help of the Spirit, that the was able to judge of the good, as well as of the ill. Thus David, The defires of our fouls are toward thee, and though all this have befallen us, yet have we not forgotten thy Name, Pful. 4.4.20. This will inable us to appeale to God as Peter, Lord then knowest I love thee, it is an evidence of a good estate.

My beart maketh.

Objerv.

I Pet. I. Mat. 26.

Gods children never totally fall from grace, though they fleep, yet their heart is awake. The Prophet Elay speaking of the Church and children of God, Ifa 6.4 3 faith, It shall be as a tree, as an oake whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves. Though you fee neither fruit, nor leaves, vet there is life in the root, The feed remains in them, there is allway a feed remaining, it is an immortall feed that we are begotten by. Peter when he denied his Master, was like an Oake that was weather beaten, yet there was life still inthe root : For questionlesse Peter loved Christ from his heart. Sometimes a Christian may be in fuch a poore cafe as the spirituall life runneth all to the heart, and the outward man is left destiture: Asin wars, when the enemy hath conquered the field, the people run into the City; and if they be beaten out of the City they run into the Caftle: the grace of God fometimes failes in the outward action, in the field, when yet it retireth to the heart, in which fort it is impregnable, My beart wakesh

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When the outward man fleeps, and there are weake

San.IIII

Simile. Acts 20.9.

Objerv.

weake dult performances, and perhaps actions amisse anisse too, yet notwithstanding the heart waketh: As we seein a swound or great scares, the bloud spirits and life, though they leave the face and hands, &c. yet they are in the heart. It is said in the Scripture of Eutichus, his life is in him still, though he seemed to be dead. As Christ said of Lazarus, so a man may say of a Christian in his worst state, his life is in him still, he is not dead, but sleeps, his heart waketh.

This is a found Doctrine and comfortable, agreeable to Scripture, and the experience of Gods people, we must not lose it therefore; but make use of it against the time of temptation. There are some pulses that discover life in the sickest man, so are there some breathings and spiritual motions of heart, that will comfort in such times. These two never faile on Gods part, his love, which is unchangeable, and his grace a fruit of his love; And two on our part, the impression of that love, and the gracious worke of the new creature. Christ never dies (saich the Apostie) as he never dyes in himself (after his Resurrection) so he never dyes in his children, there is alwayes spiritual life.

The beart maketh.

This is a fecret of Gods Sanctuary, onely belonging to Gods people, others have nothing to doe with it; they shall ever love God, and God will ever love them. The Apostle, I can rans, faith, Loventon failes. Gistsyon know shall be abolished, because the manner of knowing we

Vfe for comfort.

now

San. HII.

now usestall cease, we seethrough a glasse, &c. but love abideth. Doth our love to God abide for ever, and doth not his love to us whence it commether ours is but a reflection of Gods love. Let us comfort our selves therefore in this for the time to come, that in all the uncertainty of things in this life, we have to day, and lose to morrow; as we see in lob, there is somewhat a Saint may build on that is constant & unmoveable. I am the Lord, I change not, therefore you sonnes of lacob are not consumed. God should deny himselfe (as it were) which he cannot do, and his own constant Nature, if he should vary this way.

A Christian is what his heart and inward man is. It is a true speechof Divines, God and Nature begin there. Art begins with the face, and outward lineaments, as hypocrific, outward painting, and expressions: But grace at the Center, and from thence goes to the Circumstrence; And therefore the Church values her selfe here by the disposition, and temper of her heart. I hus I am for my outward carriage, &cc. I sleep, but my

heart shat waketh.

Therefore let us enter into our consciences and soules for the tryall of our estates, how it is with our judgements: Doe wee allow of the wayes of God, and of the Law of the inward man? How is it with our affections, and bent to good things? How with our hatred, our zeale? Is it not more for outward things, then for inward? We know what Jebn said to Ionadeb, when he would have him into his Chariot, Isthine heart

mine, then come to me ? So faith Christis thine San JIH heart as mine, then give me thy hand, but first God must have our hearts, and then our hands: A man otherwise is but a Ghost in Religion, which goes up and downe without a fpirit of its owne, but a picture, that hath an outfide, and is nothing within. Therefore especially, let us looke to our hearts, oh that there were fuch an heart in this people (faith God to Moles) to feare me alwayes for their good. This is it that Gods children defire, that their hearts may be aright fet. Wash thy heart O Ierusalem (faith the Prophet) from thy wickednesse, &c. Indeed all the outward mandepends upon this therfore Satan if he can Heb. 11. get this fort, he is fafe, & fo Satans Vicar It was a watch-word that was in Gregory 13. his time, in Q Elizabeths dayes, My for, give me thy heart, diffemble, goe to Church, and doe what you will, but Damini cor, be in heart a Papifs and goe where you will. God is not content with the heart alone (the Devill knowes if he havethe heart, he hath all: But God, as he made all, both foule and body, he will have all but yet in times of temptation, the chiefe tryall is in the beart,

And from hence, we have a maine difference between one Christian and another. A found Christian doth what he doth from the heart, he begins the worke there. What good he doth he loves in his heart first, judgethit to be good, and then he doth it.

An Hypocrite doth that he doth outwardly, and allowes not inwardly of that good he doth

San. HII. he would doe ill, and not good, if it were in his choice. The good that he doth is for by-ends, for correspondence, or dependance upon others, or conformity with the times, to cover his defignes under formality of Religion, that he may not be knowneoutwardly, as he is inwardly, an Atheift, and an Hypocrite. So he hath talfe avmes, his heart is not directed to a right marke; But it is otherwise with Gods childe, what soever good he doth it is in his heart first : What loever ill be abstaines from, he doth it from his heart, judging it to be naught; therefore he hates it, and will not doe it. Here is a maine difference of the Church from all others. It wakes in the heart. though the outward man fleeps: Butother mens hearts fleep, when they wake as you know fome men will walke and doe many things in their fleep. An Hypocrite is such a kind of man, he walks and goes ap and downe, but his heart is affect, he knowes not what he doth, nor doth he the thing out of judgement, or love, but as one afleep (as it were) he hath no inward affection unto the things he doth. A Christian is the contrary his heart's awake, when he is affeep.

Another difference from the words you may have thus. A Christian by the power of Gods Spirit in him, is sensible of the contrarieties in him, complaines, and is ashamed for the same; butan Hypocrite is not fo, he is not fenfible of his deepineffe; I fleep (faith the Church) fo much as the Church faith the flept, So much the did not flee ; for a man that is affect, cannot fay he is

affeep,

afleep, nor a dead manthat he is dead : Sofarre at San he faith he is afleep, be is awake. Now the Church confesseth that she was afterp, by that part ther was awake in her, other men doe not complaine are not sensible of their sleepinesse and slumbring, but compose themselves to flumber, and feeke darkneffe, which is a friend of fleep, they would willingly be ignorant, to keep their conscience dull, and dumbe as much as they can the it may not upbraid them. This is the disposition of a Carnall man, he is not sensible of his estate, as here the Church is.

A waking fate is a ble Bed flate.

The Church you fee supports and comforts her felfe, that the was waking in her inward man, that the was happy in that respect. How shall we docto keep & preferve our foules in this waking condition, especially in these drowsietimes

1. Propound unto them waking confiderations. What canieth our fleeps, but want of matters of more ferious observation? None will fleep when a thing is prefented of excellency more then ordinary. To see and know, and thinke of what a flate we are now advanced unto in Christ, whar we shall be ere long, year the fearefull estate we should be in, if God leave us to our selves ? A state of astonishment, miserable and wretched. beyond speech, nay beyond conceit. Thus did the bleffed foules in former times exercise their thoughts, raile and ftirre them up by meditation; that fo they might hold their fonles in a high effective of the bell things and not fuffer them to Objerv.

Quest.

loan s.

. Burmy bears wakesh, 118 fleep. We never fall to fleep in earthly and earnall delights, till the foule let its hold goe of the belt things, and ceafeth to thinke of, and to wonder at them. What made Atoles to fall from the delights of Egypt ? he faw the basest things in Religion were greater then the greatest things in the Court, yeainthe World. He esteemed the re-Heb. 11. proach of Christ better then the greatest treasures of Egypt. Make the heart thinke of the foortnese, and vani-2 Confideration to of the life, with the uncertainty of the time of our death; and of what wondrous confequent it is to be in the state of Grace before we die. The uncertainty of the gales of Grace, that there may be Luk. 19.42. Mat. 23.37 agood houre, which if we paffe, we may never have the like againe. As the Angell descended John s. at a certaine houre into the poole of Bethefda, when those that entred not immediately after, went away ficke asthey came: So there are certaine good houres, which let us not negled, this will help to keepus waking. The necessity of Grace, 3. Confideration and then the free dispensing of it in Gods good time, and withall the terrour of the Lords day, Remembring (faith Saint Paul) the terrour of the # Cor. 5. 1 1. Lord, I labour to fir up al men, &cc. Indeed it should make us frire up our hearts, when we confider the terrour of the Lord, to thinke that ere long we shall be all drawne to an exact account, before a strict, precise Judge ; And shall our eyes then be fleeping and careleffes. Thefe and fuch like confiderations out of spirituall wisedome we

thould propound to our felves, that fo we might

bave

have waking foules, and preferve them in a right | San. 1111. temper.

The foule is as the object is that is presented to it, and as the certainty of the apprehenfion is of that object. It conduceth much therefore to the awakening of the souleto keep faith awake. It's not the greatnesse alone, but the presence of great things that stirs us now it is the nature of faith to make things powerfully present to the foule; for it fets things before us in the word of Ichovah, that made all things of nothing, and is Lord of his word, to give a being to what foever he hath spoken. Faith is an awakening Grace, keep that

awake, and it will keep all other graces waking. When a man beleeves, that all these things shall be on fire ere long, that Heaven and Earth shall fall in peeces, that we shall be called to give an account, before that time we may be taken away. Is it not a wonder we stand so long, when Cities, stone wals fall, and Kingdomes cometo fudden periods ? When faith apprehends, and fets this to the eye of the fonlesit affects the fame marvellously; therefore let faith fet before the foul fome present thoughts according to its temper; fometimes terrible things to awaken it out of its dulneffe; fometimes glorious things, Promiles, and Mercies, to waken it out of its fadnesse, &c. When we are in a prosperous estate, let faith make present all the sinnes and temptations that ulually accompany such an estate, as pride, security, felfe-applause and the like : If in advertity, thinke also of what finnes may beset us there,

2. Meares. To keepfaith making.

Heb.II.

this

SER. IIII.

this will awaken up such graces in us, as are sutable to such an estate, for the preventing of such sinnes and temptations, and so keep our hearts in exercise to godinesse; then which, nothing will more prevent sleeping.

3. Meanes.
To labour for a
great measure
of the Spirit of
God.

And withall, labour for abundance of the Spirit of God; for what makes men fleepy and drowfie: the want of spirits, we are dull, and overloden with groffe humors, whereby the strength sinkes and failes? Christians should know, that there is a necessity, if they will keep themselves waking, to keep themselves spirituall. Pray for the Spirit above all things, it is the life of our life, the soule of our soule. What is the body without the soul, or the soule without the Spirit of God? even a dead lump. And let us keep our selves in such good wayes, as we may expect the presence of the Spirit to be about us, which will keep us awake.

4. Meanes. To keep our felves in the light. We must keep our selves in as much light as may be; for all sleepinesse comes with darknesse: Let us keep our soules in a perpetual light, when any doubt or darke thought ariseth, upon yeelding thereunto comes a sleepy temper; sleepinesse in the affections ariseth from darknesse of judgement, the more we labour to increase our knowledge, and the more the spiritual light and beames of it thing in at our windowes, the better it will be for us, and the more shall we be able to keep awake. What makes men in their corruptions to avoid the Ministery of the Word, or any thing that may awake their consciences. It is

the

the defire they have to fleep, they know, the San, IIII. more they know, the more they must practife, or elfe they must have a galled conscience: They fee Religion will not stand with their ends, rich they must be and great they will be; but if they fuffer the light to grow upon them, that will tell them they must not rise and be great, by these and fuch courfes. A gracious heart will be defirous of spirituall knowledge especially, and not care how neare the Word comes: because they ingeniously and freely defire to be spiritually better; they make all things in the world yeeld to the inward man; they defire to know their owne corruptions and evils more and more, and therefore love the light as shildren of the light, and of the day, 1 The S.5. Sleep is a worke of darkneffe, men therefore of darke and drowfie hearts defire darknesse for that very end, that their consciences may sleep.

Labour to preserve the soule in the feare of God : 5. Meanes. because feare is a waking affection, yea one of the wakefulleft: For, Naturally we are more moved with dangers then firred with hopes; therefore, that affection that is most conversant about danger, is the most rowzing and waking affection. Preferve therefore the feare of God by all meanes. It is one Character of a Christian, who, when he hath loft almost all Grace (to his feeling) yet the feare of God is alwayes left with him; he feares fin, and the reward of it; and therefore God makes that awe the Bond of the New Covenant. I will put my feare into their hearts, that they [er. 3 3.39.

SER. IIII.

Who are the best Christians.

shall never depart from me. One Christian is better then another by how much more he wakes, and feares more then another. Of all Christians. marke those are most gracious, spirituall, and heavenly, that are the most awefull, and carefull of their speeches, courses, and demeanors : tender even of offending God in little things. You shall not have light and common oathes come from them, nor unfavoury speeches. Sometimes a good Christian may in a state of sleepinesse be faulty fome way: But he growes in the knowledge of the greatnesse of God, and the experience of his owne infirmities, as he growes in the sense of the love of God. He is afraid to lose that fweet Communion any ways or to grieve the Spirit of God: Therefore, alwayes as a man growes in grace, he growes in awfulneffe, and in jeatousie of his owne corruptions. Therefore, let us preferve by all meanes this awefull affection, the fear of God: Let us then often fearch the state of our own foules, our going backward or forward. how it is between God and our foules ; how fit we areto die, and to fuffer ? how fit for the times that may befall us ? Let us examine the flate of our own fouls, which wil preferve us in a waking eftate, especially examine our selves in regard of the finnes of the place, and the times where we live of the fins of our owne inclination how we fland affected and byased in all those refpects, and fee how jealous we are of dangers in this kind. Those that will keep waking foules, must consider the danger of the place where

they live, and the times; what finnes raigne; what | San. IIII finnes fuch a company as they converse with are subject unto, and their owne weaknesseto be lead away with such temptations? This jealousie is a branch of that feare, that we spake of before, arifing from the fearching of our owne hearts and dispositions. It is a notable means to keep us awake when we keep our hearts in feare of fuch finnes as either by calling, custome, company, or the time we live in, or by our owne disposition we are most prene too.

There is no Christian, but he hath some speciall finne to which he is more prone then to an other, one way or other, either by course of life, or complection. Herenow is the care & watchfulneffe of a Christian Spirit, that knowing by examination, and tryall of his owne heart, his weaknesse, he doth especially fence against that, which he is most inclined to; and is able to speak most against that sinne of all others, and to bring the strongest arguments to dishearten others from practife of it.

In the last place, it is a thing of no small consequence, that we keep company with waking and faithfull Christians, such as neither sleep themselves, ordoe willingly suffer any to sleep that are neare them.

It is a report, and a true one of the sweating ficknes, that they that were kept awake by those that were with them escaped, but the ficknesse was deadly if they were fuffered to fleep. It is one of the best fruits of the Communion of Saints.

6. Meanes. The Communion of Saints.

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SER. IIII.

Saints, and of our spirituall good acquaintance to keep one another awake. Its an unpleasing worke on both sides: But we shall one day cry out against all them that have pleased themselves and us, in rocking us asleep, and thank those that have pulled us with fewe out of sire, though against our wils.

Let us labour upon our owne hearts in the conficionable use of all these meanes, in their severall times and scasons, that we may keep our hearts waking, and the more earnest ought we to be from consideration of the present age and season

in which we live.

Certainly a drowfie temper is the most ordinary temper in the world: For would men fuffer idle words, yea filthy and rotten talke to come from their mouthes if they were awake? Would a waking man run into a pit ? or upon a fwords point ? A manthat is affeep may doe any thing. What doe men meane when they feare not to lye, diffemble, and rush upon the pikes of Gods displeasure ? When they say one thing and doe another, are they not dead ? or take them at the best, are they not asleep ? Were they awake, would they ever doe thus! Will not a fowle that hath wings avoid the fnare or will a beaft run into a pit when it fees it? There is a fnare laid in your Play-houses, gaming-houses, Commonhouses that Gentlemen frequent that generally professe Religion, and take the Communion. If the eye of their foules were awake, would they run into these snares, that their owne consciences

tell them are to ? If there be any goodnesse in San. IIII. their foules, it is wondrous fleepy; There is no man (even the best) but may complaine something, that they are overtaken in the contagion of these infectious times; they catch drowsie tempers (as our Saviour faith) of those latter times: For the abundance of iniquity, the love of mamy shall waxe cold. A chill temper growes ever from the coldnesse of the times that we live in. wherein the best may complaine of coldnesse, but there is great difference. The life of many, we fee, is a continual! fleep.

Let us especially watch over our selves in the use of liberty and such things as are in themfelves lawfull. It is a bleffed state, when a Christian carries himselfe so in his liberty, that his heart condemnes him not for the abuse of that which it alloweth, and justly in a moderate use. Recreations are lawfull, who denies it ? To refresh a mans selfe, is not only lawfull, but necesfary. God knew it well enough: Therefore hath allotted time for fleep, and the like. But we must not turne Recreation into a Calling, to spendtoo much time in it.

Where there is least feare, there is most danger alwayes. Now because in lawfull things there is least feare, we are there in most danger. It istrue for the most part, Licitis perimus omues, more men perish in the Church of God by the abuse of lawfull things, then by unlawfull, more by meat, then by poifon : Because every man takes heed of poison, being he knowes the veSER. IIII.

The excellency of a waking Christian.

Mark. 13.37.

nome of it, but how many men furfet, and dye by meat ? fo many men die by lawfull things, they eternally perish in the abuse of their liberties, more then in groffe fins. Therefore let us keep awake, that we may carry our felves fo in our liberties, that we condemne not our felves in the use of them. We will conclude this point with the Meditation of the Excellency of a waking Christian, when he is in a right temper, he is an excellent person, fit for all affaies, he is then impregnable: Satan hath nothing to doe with him, for he (as it is faid) is then a wife man and hath his eyes in bis bead; he knowes himselfe his state his enemies, and adversaries, the snares of Prosperity, and Adversiry, and of all conditions, &c. Therefore he being awake, is not overcome of the evill of any condition, and is ready for the good of any estate. He that hath a waking soule, he sees all the advantages of good, and all the fnares that might draw him to ill. What a bleffed estate is this! In all things therefore watch:in all estates, in all times, and in all actions. There is adanger in every thing without watchfulnesse. There is a Scorpion under every stone (as the Proverbeis)a snare under every bleffing of God, and in every condition, which Satan useth as a weapon to hurr us. Adverfity to discourage us, Properity to puffe us up. When, if a Christian hath not a waking foule, Satan hath him in his fnare; In Profesity to be proud and fecure (In Advertitie to murmuro, repine, be dejected and call Gods Providence into question. When a Christian

It is the voice of my Belo ved that knocketh.

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Christian hath a heart, and grace to awake, then SER. V. his Love, his Patience, his Faith is awake, as it should be he is fit for all conditions to doe good in them, and to take good by them-

Let us therefore labour to preserve watchfull and waking hearts continually, that so we may be fit to live, to die, and to appeare before the judgement leat of God; to doe what we should doe, and fuffer what we should suffer, being squared for all effates what foever.

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The fifth Sermon.

CANT. V. VER. II. It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, faying, Open to me, my Sifter, my Love, my Dove, my Vndefiled: For my bead is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the Night.

Itherto by Gods affiftance, we have heard largely, both of the Churches M freping, and Heart waking. What this fleeping, and Heart-waking is How it comes, the tryals of thefe

opposite dispositions; of the danger of sleeping, and excellency of Heart-waking; and of the helps and means, both to thun the one, and pre-

SER. V.

ferve the other. Now the Church having fo freely and ingeniously confessed what she could against her self, proceeds yet further to acquaint us with the particulars in her heart-waking difpolition: Which were two-fold, the heard and different the voice of her Beloved, who for all her fleep, was her Beloveds ftill, and more then that, the remembers all his fweet words and allurements, whereby he pressed her to open unto him, faying, Open to me my Love, my Dove, my Vndefiled, which is fer out, and amplified with a further moving argument of those inconveniences Christ had suffered in his waiting for entertainment in her heart. For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. All which aggravates her offence, and his rare good. nesse, and patience towards miserable sinners, so to wait from time to time for admission into our wretched foules, that he may rule and governe them by his holy Spirit. Therefore we had great need to thun this fleepy diftemper of foul, which for the prefere fo locks up the everlasting gates of our foule, that the King of glory cannot enter in; and to strive for this blessed heart-waking disposition, which may help us at all times to fee our dangers, and by Gods bleffing recover us out of them, as here the Church doth at length though first smarting and well bearen by the watch men, in a world of perplexities, ere the can recover the fence of her former union, and Communion with Christ.

Pfal. 24.

And furely, we finde by experience, what a

Oblers.

woefull thing it is for the foule, which hath once Saw. V. tafted how gracious the Lord is to be long without a sence of Gods love: For when it looks upon finne, as the cause of this separation; this is for the time, as fo many deaths unto ir. Therefore the Churches experience must be our warningpeece to take heed how we grieve the Spirit, and so fall into this spirituall sleep: Wherein yetthis is a good figne, that yet we are not in a desperate dead fleep, when we can with her fay,

It is the voice of my Beloved that knocks, faying,

openunto me. &c.

In which words you have,

1. The Churches acknowledgement of Christs voice.

2. Of his carriage towards her.

I. Her acknowledgement is fet downe here. It is the voice of my Beloved.

2. His carriage, He knocks, &c. wherein, In A

I. His Patience in suffering sbings unworthy and utterly unbeseeming for him. He doth not onely knocke, but he continues knocking, till his bead was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night

2. His friendly Compellation, open to mee my love, my dove, my undefiled. Loe here are sweet actions, fweet words, and all to melethe heart of

the Spouse.

First, the Churches acknowledgement is to be confidered, confesfing, It withe voice of her Bela. wed. The first thing to be observed in this acknowledgement is. That the Church however

fleepy

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It is the poice of my Beloved

SER.V.

fleepy and drowfie she was; yet not with standing her heart was so far a wake, as to know the voice of her husband. The point is this,

Observ.

That a Christian soule doth know and may discerne the voice of Christ, yea and that even in a lazie, sleepy estate. But much more when in a good and lively frame.

Ioh. 10.

Gods Beleevers are Christs sheep: Now my sheep (saith Christ) heave my voice. It is the care-marke (as it were) of a Christian, one of the Characters of the new man, Totaste words by the eare (as lob saith) he hath a spiritual taste, a discerning relish in his care, because he hath the Spirit of God, and therefore relisheth what is connatural, and sutable to the Spirit. Now the voice of Christ without in the ministery, and the Spirit of Christ within in the heart, are connatural and sutable

Iob 18.11.

Difference of Christians by a spirituall tasse in bearing.

each to other. And furely foir is, That this is one way to discerne a true Christian from an other even by a tast in hearing : Forthofe that have a spiritual relish, they can heare with some delight things that are most Spirituall. As the Heathen man faid of a medow. that some creatures come to car one fort of herbs: others another, all that which is fit for them: Men to walke therein for delight; All for ends futable to their nature. So in comming to heare the Word of God; some come to observe the elegancy of words and phrases; some to carch advantage (perhaps) against the speaker, men of adevillish temper, and some to conforme themselves to the custome of the places they live

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live in a or to fatisfie the clamours of a troubled confcience, that will have fome divine duty performed, elfe it goes on with much vexation. But every true Christian comes, and relisheth what is spirituall: And when outward things can conveigh in fimilitudes spirituall things aptly to the minde, he relisheth this not as elegant and pleafing his fancy fo much, as for conveighing the voice of Christ unto his foule. So that a man may much be helpt to know his flate in Grace. and what he is by his eare : Itching eares usually are such as are led with luft, as the Apostle faith. and they must be clawed. They are fick and nothing will downe with them, they quarrell with every thing that is wholesome (as they did with Manna) no Sermons will please them, no bread is fine and white enough. Whereas indeed, it is their owne diftemper is in fault. As thosethat goe in a ship upon the Sea; it is not the tossing, but the stomacke, that causeth a sicknesse, the choler within, and not the waves without : So the different of these men that nothing will down with them, is from their owne distemper. If Christ himselfe were here a preaching, they would be fure to cavillat fomthing, as then men did, when he preached in his owne person; Because they labour of lusts, which they resolve to feed and cherish.

And againe, Observe it against our Adversaries: What say they? How shall we know that the Word is the Word of God? For this hereticke saith thus, and this interprets it thus. This SER. V.

is the common Objection of the great Rabbies amongst them in their writings, how we can know the Word to be Gods, considering there are such heresies in the Churches, and such contrariety of opinions concerning the Scriptures read in the Churches.

Ioh. 10,

Even thus to object & ask, is an argument and testimony, that these men have not the Spirit of Christsfor His heep know his voice: who howfoever they cannot interpret all places of Scripture; yet they can difcerne in the Scripture what is futable food for them; or in the unfolding of the Scriptures, in preaching, they can discerne agreeable food forthem, having a faculty to reject that which is not fit for nourishment, to let it goe. As there is in parure passages fit for concoction, and digeftion, and for rejection: fo there is in the foule to worke out of the Word, even out of that which is bard, yet wholesome, what is fit for the foule and spirit. If it be cast downe, it feeds upon the promifes for direction, and confolation; and what is not fit nourishment that it rejects, that is, if it be of a contrary nature, heterogeniall. Therefore we answer them thus: That Gods sheep heare bis voice, That his Word left in the Church (when it is unfolded) his Spirit goes together with it, breeding a relish of the Word in the hearts of people, whereby they are able to tafte and relish it; and it hath a supernaturall power and Majesty in it, which carries its owne evidence with it. How foull we know light to be light? It carries evidence in its felfe that it is light.

Ioh, 2.10.

e Sa

1 Cor.14.15.

light. How know we that the fire is hot? because it carries evidence in it selfethat it is so. So if you aske, How we know the Word of Godto be the Word of God? it carries in it selfe inbred Arguments and Charecters, that the soule can say none but this Word can be the Word of God, it hath such a majesty and power to cast downe, and raise up, and to comfort, and to direct with such power and majesty, that it carries with it its owne evidence, and it is argument enough for it. And thus we answer them, which they can answer no way, but by cavils. Gods sheep beare the voice of Christ. He speakes, and the Church understands him, and a strangers voice they will not heare, soh. 10.5.

And indeed, this is the only fure way of understanding the Word to be of God, from an inbred Principle of the majesty in the Word, and a powerfull worke thereof on the foule it felfe, and an affent fo grounded, is that which makes a found Christian. If we should aske what is the reason there be so many that apost atize, fall away, grow prophane, and are fo unfruitfull under the Gofpell? notwithflanding they heare fo much as they does the answer is, their soules were never founded and bottomed upon this, that it is the Word of God, and Divine Truth ; fo as to be able to fay, I have felt it by experience, that it is the voice of Chrift. Therefore they fo foone Apostatize, let lesuites, or seducers set upon them; They were never perswaded from inbred Arguments, that the voice of Christ is the Word of Godothers from friemeffegrow prophane, be-

Why somany apostatize.

cause

SER.V.

cause they were never convinced by the power and majesty of the truth in it selfe; and then in the end they despaire, notwithstanding all the promises, because they were never convinced of the truth of them, they cannot say Amen to all the promises: But the Church can say considently upon sound experience, It is the voice of my Beloved, &c.

Againe, Whereas the Church faith here, It is the voices of my Beloved, &cc. and knowes this

voice of her Beloved, we may note,

Observ.

That the Church of God, and every Christian takes notice of the meanes that God useth for their Calvation.

A Christian is sensible of all the blessed helps he hath to salvation. To a dead heart, it is all one, whether they have meanes or no meanes, but a Christian soule takes notice of all the meanes. It is the woice of my Beloved that knocketh, it seeth Christ in all.

A diffinition betwixt fleep in divers Chrifrians, even at the worft, and deadnesse in a natural man. And marke what the Church faith moreover, It is the voice of my Beloved, the acknowledgeth Christ to be beloved of hersthough the were asleep. So then here is a distinction between the sleep of a Christian, and the dead sleep of another naturall man: The one when he sleeps, His beart dath not enely awake, but it is awake to discerne the voice of Christ; it can relish in reading what is spirituall and good, what is savoury, and what not. And likewise take a Christian at the worst, when he is asleep, he loves Christ, he will doe nothing against him. I can doe nothing (faith Paul) against

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the truth, but for the truth; he will doe nothing against the cause of Religion, there is a new Nature in him, that he cannot doe otherwise, he cannot but love, he cannot sinne with a full purpose, nor speake against a good cause, because he hath a new nature that leads him another way, Christ is her Beloveds still though she steep.

Take a Christian at the lowest, his heart yearnes

after Christ.

Acknowledging him to be his Beloved, There is a conjugall chaftity in the foul of a Christian, holding firme to the covenant and marriage between Christ and ir, he keeps that unviolable, though he may be untoward, sleepy, and drow-fie, yet there is alwaies a conjugall, spouse-like affection. It is the voice of my Beloved, &cc.

Now leaving the Churches notice of the voice of Christ, We come to Christs carriage towards

ber.

1. He knocketh, and then we have,

2. His patiencein that Carriage.

My head is filled with dew, and my lockes with the drops of the night, &cc. Here is Patience and Mercy to endure this indignity at the Churches hand, to ftand at her courtefie to come in, befides 3.the Compellation, afterwards to be spoken of. The generall observation from Christs carriage, is this,

That Christ still desires a further and further Com-

munion with his Church.

Even as the true foule, that is touched with the Spirit, defires nearer and nearer Communion

Observ.

Objero.

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with Christ. So he seeks nearer and nearer Communion with his Spoule, by all fanctified means. Christ hath never enough of the foule; he would have them more and more open to him, our hearts are for Christ, who hath the heaven of heavens, and the foule of a beleeving Christian for himselfe to dwell in ; he contents not himself to be in heaven alone, but he will have our hearts. He knocks here, waits, speaks friendly and lovingly with fuch sweet words, My Love, my Dove,&c. We had a bleffed Communion in the state of innocency, and shall have a glorious Communion in heaven, when the marriage shall be consummated; but now the time of this life is but as the time of the contract, during which there are yet many mutuall passages of love between him and his Spoule, a defire of mutuall Communion of either fide. Christ defires further entertainment in his Churches heart and affection, that he might lodge and dwell there: And likewise there is the like defire in the Church (when the is in a right temper) fo that if any strangenesse between Christ, & any mans foule, that hath tafted how good the Lord is let him not blame Christ for it, for he delights not in strangenesse; He that knocks, and stands knocking, while his locks are bedewed with the drops of the night? Doth he delight in strangenesse, that makes all this love to a Christians soule ? Certainly, No.

That the cause of Christs strangenesse to the Church is in our selves.

Therefore looke for the cause of his strangenesse arany time in thine owne selfe; As, whether

we cast our selves imprudently into company, that Ser. V. are not fit to be consulted withall, in whom the Spirit is not, and who cannot doe us any good, or they cast themselves to us. Evill company is a great dampning, whereby a Christian loseth his comfort much, especially that intimate Communion with God, whence we may fall into fecurity.

Againe, Discontinuing of Religious exercises doth wonderfully cause Christ to withdraw himselfe ; He makes no more love to our foules, when we neglect the meanes, and discontinue holy exercises, and religious company, when we flir not up the graces of Gods Spirit; being this way negligent, it is no wonder that Christ makes no more love. to our foules, when we prize and value not the Communion that should be between the soule and Christ, as we should. Whom have I in heaven but thee ? Thy loving kindnesse is better then life (faith the Pfalmist) when we prize not this, it is just with Christ to make himselfe strange. Where love is not valued and efficemed, it is effranged, and for a while hides it felfe, So that these with other courses, and failings, we may finde to be the ground and reason of the strangenesse between Christ and the soule; for certainly the cause is not in him: for we fee here, he ufeth all meanes to be entertained by a Christian soule, he knocks.

You know what he fayes to the Church of Landicea, Rev. 2.20. Behold I fland at the doore, and knocke. So here, It is she voice of my Belowed that knocketh; therefore in such a case, Tearch your

Pfal. 73.25.

P[al.63.3.

Lament. 3.

K 2

owne

SER. V.

owne hearts, where if there be deadnesse, and defertion of Spirit, lay the blame upon your felves, and enter into a fearch of your owne waves, and fee what may be the cause.

That Christ takes not the advantage and forfeiture of the fins of bis Church. Rev. 3.20.

Now to come more particularly to Christs carriage here knocking at the heart of the fleepy Church. We fee, That Christ takes not the advantage and forfeiture of the fins of bis Church, to leave them altogether, but makes further and further love to them, though the Church be fleepy, Christ continues knocking. The Church of Landices was a luke-warme, proud, hypocriticall Church: vet, Behold (faith Christ) I stand at the doore, and knocke, and it was fuch a Church as was vaineglorious, and conceited. I am rich, and want nothing, when she was poore, blind, and naked. And here he doth not onely stand knocking, but he withall fuffereth indignities, the dew to fall upon him, which we shall speake more of hereafter. Christ therefore refuseth not weake sinners, he that commands, that we should receive him that is weake in the faith, and not call him off from our fellowship, and company, will he reject him that is weake and sleepy? No, what Father will passe by, or neglect his childe for some failings, and weaknesses. Nature will move him to respect him as his childe.

Now Christ is mercifult both by his office, and by his nature; our nature he tooke upon him. that he might be a mercifull Redeemer. And thenas God also he is love. God is love, that is, whatfoever God shewes himselfe to his

Church

Heb. 2. 17. I Joh. 4, 16.

Church, he doth it in love: If he be angry in cor- SER. V. recting it is out of love : It Mercifull, it is out of love: It he be Powerfull in defending his Church, and revenging himselfe on our Enemies, all is love, God is love ((aith Tobn) that is, he shewes himselfe only in wayes, expressions and chara-Aers of love to his Church : So Christ, as God, is all love to the Church. And we fee the Scriptures also to set out God as love, both in his Essence, and in his Relations, 1. In Relations of love to his Church, He is a Father, As a Father pittieth his childe, fo the Lord pitties them that feare, him; and 2. also in those sweet Attributes of love, which are his Effence, as we fee, Exod. 34.6. When God describes himselfe to Atoles after his defire to know him, in the former Chapter, Thou canst not fee me and live vet he would make him know him, as was fit for him to be knowne, Ichovah, Ichovah, Strong, Meroifull, Gracious, Long-suffering, &c. Thus God will be knowne in these Attributes of Consolation. So Christas God, is all love and mercy: Likewife Christ as man, he was man for this end to be all love and mercy: Take him in his office, as Iefus to be a Saviour, he carrieth falvation in his wings, as it is, Mal. 4.2. both by Office, and by Nature.

And here how excellently is the expression of Christs mercy, love and patience fet out? He knocks, my Beloved knocketh, &c. faying, He knocks for further entrance (as was shewed before) fome he had already, but he would have further: As you know we have divers rooms and

1 Ioh.4.8.

Pfal, 103.

Exod.34 6.

K 3

places

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places in our houses. There is the court, the hall, the parlour, and closer: The hall for common persons, the parlour for those of better fashion, the closet for a mans selfe, and those that are intimate friends: So a Christian hath roome in his heart for worldly thoughts, but his closet, his inmost affections, are kept for his inmost friend Christ, who is not content with the hall, but will come into the very closet, he knocks that we should open, and let him come into our hearts, into our more intimate affections and love; nothing will content him but intimatenesse, for he deserves it, as we strall see, he knocks for this end. But how doth he knocks?

How Christ is faid to knocke at our bearts.

By a voice.

Sometimes both by voice and knocking.

Every kind of way: It is taken from the fashion of men in this kinde (God condescending to speak to us in our own language) Samtimes you know, There is a knocking or calling forestrance by voice, when a voice may serve, and then there needs no further knocking.

Sometimes bet by voice and bracking: If voice will not ferve, knocking comes after: So it is here, Christ doth knocke, and speake, usethat voice of his Word, and knocks by his workes, and both together somtimes, whether by works of mercy or of judgement, he labours to enter into the soule, to raise the sleepy soule that way; he begins with mercy usually. 1. By mercies, All the creatures and blessings of God carry in them (as it were) a voice of God to the soule, that it would entertain his love. There goes a voice of love with every blessing. And the love, the mercies with every blessing.

Sak. Ma

cy, and the goodnesse of God in the creature, is better then the creature it selfe: As we say of gists, The love of the giver is better then the gistis selfe. So the love of God in all his sweet benefits is better then the thing it selfe, and so in that we have, there is a voice (as it were) intreating us to entertaine God, and Christ in all his mercies, yea every creature (as one faith) and benefit speaks as it were thus to us; We serve thee, that thou may est serve him, that made thee and we. There is a speech (as it were) in every two ur, which mercies, if they cannot prevaile, then come corrections, which are the voice of God also: Heare the rod, and him that smiteth; but hath the rod a voice:

Yes, for what doe corrections speake, but amendment of the fault we are corrected for ? fo we must heare the rod, all corrections tend to this purpole, they are as knockings, that we should open to God and Christ. And because corrections of themselves will not amend us. God to this kinds of knocking, adds a voice, he teacheth and corrects together. Happy is that man that thou correctest, and teacheft out of thy Law (faith the Pfalmift) Correction without reaching is to little purpose; therefore God adds instruction to correction. He opens the conscience, so that it tels us it is for this that you are corrected, and together with confcience, gives his Spirit to tell us it isforthis, or that you are corrected : you are too blame inchis; this you have done, that you thould not have done : So that currection are

Missh 6.9.

By the rod which bath a voice in cor-

Pfal.94.10.9

K 4

knockings:

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It is the vaice of my Beloved

SER. V.

Lev. 26, 24.

knockings; but then especially when they have instruction thus with them. They are messengers from God, both Blessings and Corrections, they will not away (especially corrections) till they have an answer, forthey are sent of God, who will add seven times more; and if the first be not answered, then he sends after them, he will be sure to have an answer, either in our Conversion, or Confusion, when he begins once.

hearts. The examples of those we live among that are good, they call upon w. The patternes of their holy life. The examples of Gods justice upon others, are speeches to us; Godknocks arour doore then, He intends our correction, when he visits another, when if we amend by that, he needs not

take us in hand.

But besides all this, there is a more neare knocking, that Christ usether the Church, His ministerial knocking, when he was here in the dayes of his stell, he was a Preacher and Prophet himselfe, and now he is ascended into heaven, he hathgivengists to men, and men to the Church, whom bespeakes by to the end of the world, they are Christs mouth, as wee said of the pen-men of holy Scripture; they were but the hand to write, Christ was the head to indite: So in preaching and unfolding the Word; they are but Christs mouth and his voyee (as it is said of sohn). Now he is inheaven, he speaks by them; He that heavethy is heaveth me; be that despites prodessigns the said of the said of some despite heavethy in heaveth me; be that despites prodessigns the said of the said of some set that despites the said of some set that despites the said of said of some set that despites the said of said of said of some set that despites the said of said of

God macheth by the goodexamples of others Luk 13.2,3.

By his minister

Eph-4

Luk.10.17.

Phil. 1.2.

1 Thef. 3.79.

ved or rejected in his Ministers, asit is faid of No- San. V. abs time. The Spirit of Christ preached in the dayes of Noah to the foules now in prifon, &c. Christ as God did preach before he was incarnate by No. ab to the old world, which is now in prison, in hell, becausethey refused to heare Christ speake to them by Nosh: Much more now after the dayes of his flesh, that he is in heaven, he speaks and preacheth to us, which if we regard not, we are like to be in prison, asthole soules are now in prison for neglecting the preaching of Noah, 1 Pet. 3.19. So the Ministers are Christs mouth, when they speake he speaks by them, and they are as Embaffadours of Christ (whom they should imitate in mildnesse) We therefore as Embaffadors befeech and intreat you, as if Christ by us should speake to you; so we intreat you to be reconciled unto God. And you know what heart-breaking words the Apostle useth in all his Epistles (especially when he writes to Christians in a good state) as to the Philippians, If there be any bowels of mercy if there be any confolation in Christ, then regard what I fay, be of one mind. And among the Theffalonians, He was as a Nurse to them : So Christ speakes by them, and puts his owne affections into them, that as he is tender, and full of bowels himselfe, so he hath put the same bowels into those that are his true Minifters.

He speakes by them, and they use all kinde of meanes that Christ may be entertained into their hearts. They moove all ftones (as it were)

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lometimes threatenings; fometimes intreaties; fometimes they come as fons of thunder, fome-times with the Hill voice of fivest promifes; And because one man is not so fit as another for all varieties of conditions and spirits; therefore God gives variety of gifts to his Ministers, that they may knocke at the heart of every man by their feverall gifts : For some have more rowzing, some more infinuating gifts, some more Legall, some more Evangelical spirits, yet all for the Churches good John Baptift by a more thundering way of preaching, to make way for Christ to come, threateneth judgement. But Christ then he comes with a Bleffed are the poore in Spirit, Bleffed are they that hunger and thirst for Righteoufneffe, &cc. All kind of meanes have been used in the ministery from the beginning of the world.

Mat. 5.3.

By the spirit.

And because of it selfe this ministery it is a dead letter; therefore he joynes that with the Word, which knocks at the heart together with the Word, not severed from it, but is the life of it, obthe Spirit is the life and soulc of the Word; and when the inward word, or voice of the Spirit, and the outward word or Minestery go together, then Christ doth more effectually knocke, and stirup the heart.

Now this Spirit with sweet inspirations knockes, mooves the heart, lightens the understanding, quickens the dult affections, and stirres them up to duty, as it is, 1/2.20.21. And thine cares shall be are a voice behind thee, saying, This is

the

thy way, walke in it. The Spirit mooves us fweet- SER. V. ly agreeable to our owne nature, it offers not violence to us: But fo as in Hofea 11.4. I drew them by the cards of a man; that is, by reasons and motives befitting the nature of man, motives of love: So the Spirit together with the word, works upon as as we are men by rationall motives, fetting good before us : If we will let Christ into governe, and rule us; and by the danger on the contrary, fo moving, and ftirring up our affections: These be the cords of a man.

And besides his Spirit, God hath planted in us a Conscience to call upon us, to be his Vicar, a little god in usto doe his office, ro call uponus, to direct us, checke, and condemne us, which in

great mercy he bath placed in us.

Thus we fee what meanes Christ useth here: His voice, works, and word, works of Mercy and of Correction, his Wordtogether with his Spirit, and the Conscience, that he hath planted to be (as it were) a god in us, which together with his Spirit may moove us to duty. This Austin Speaks of, fellions, when he faith, Dens in me, &c. God fake in me off. and I knew it not; He meanes it of Conscience, together with the Spirit, ftirring up motives to leave his finfull courses. God knocked in me, and I confidered it not. I cried, modo, and modo, fine mode. I put off God, now I will, and now I will but I had no moderation, I knew no limits. And whilest Christ thus knocketh, all the three Persons may be faid to doe it : For as it is faid elsewhere, that God was and is in Christ reconci-

The Conscience alfo knockes.

ObieE.

2 Car.5.19

ling

SBR.V.

Ioh. s.

ling the world, &c. For what foever Christ did, he did it as anointed, and by office : And therfore God doth it in Christ, and by Christ, and so in fome fort God died in his humane nature when Christ died. So here the Father beseecheth. when Christ beseecheth, because he beseecheth that is fent from him, and anointed of the Father. And God the Father floops to us, when Christ stoops, because he is fent of the Father. and doth all by his Fathers command and commission. So besides his owne bowels, there is the Father and the Spirit with Christ, who doth all by his Spirit, and from his Father, from whom he hath commission. Therefore God the Father. Sonne, and Holy-Ghost knocke at the heart. Open to me my love, my dove, my undefiled, but Christ especially by his Spirit, because it is his office.

Obiett.

But some may object, Christ can open to himfelfe, why doth he not take the key and open, and make way for himselfe? Who will knocke, when he hath the key himselfe? and who will knocke, when there is none wishin to open? Christ can open to himselfe, and we have no free-will, nor power to open?

Bellarmine makes this objection, and speakes very rudely, that he is an unwise man to knocke, where there is no man within to open; and that if Christ knocke, and we cannot open, it is a delusion to exhort to open, and that therefore there

must needs be free-will in us to open.

The Answeris: First, Christ speakes to the Spoule here, and so many such exhortations are given

Answ.

why Christ
knocks, though
be bash power
to open to bimselfe, and bids
m open, who
want power to
doe to.

given to them that have the Spirit of God already, who could by the help thereof open : For good and gracious men are moved first by the Spirit, and then they moovesthey are Moi Mo.

ventes, and Atti Agentes. They are acted firft by the Spirit, and then they doe act by it, not of themselves : as the inferiour Orbes moove not,

but as they are mooved by the superiour. The Question is not of them in the state of Grace, but at their first conversion, when especially we say

that Christ speakes to them that he meanes to convert, He knocks at their hearts, and opens together with his feech: Then there goes a power, that they shall open, for his words are operative words; as

it was in the Creation, Let there belight, it was an Gen. 13. operative word, and there was light. Let there be fuch a Creature, it was an operative working word, and there was fuch a Creature prefently: So he opens together with that Word. With

that invitation and command, there goes an Almighty power to inable the fouleto open; Were it not a wife reason to say, When Christ called to Lazarus to come forth, that we should reason he had life to yeeld to Christ, when he bad him come forth ? no, he was rotten in his grave al-

most; but with Christs speaking to Lazarus, there

Ioh. 11.43.

went an Almighty power, that gave life to him, by which life he heard what Christ said, Arise Lazarus : So Christ by his Spirit cloaths his word in the Minestery, when he speaks to people with a mighty power: as the Minister speaks to the eare, Christ speaks, opens, and unlocks the

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A&s 16.13.

heart at the same time, and gives it power to open, not from it selfe, but from Christ. Paul speaks to Lydian eare, Christ to her heart, and opened it, as the Text sayes, whereby she beleeves, so Christ opens the heart.

Quest.

But, Why doth he thus worke?

Because he will preserve Nature, and the principlesthereof, and so he deales with us, working accordingly; the manner of working of the reasonable creature, is to worke freely by a sweet inclination, not by violence. Therefore when he works the worke of Conversion, he doth it in a fweet manner, though it be mighty for the Efficaciousnesse of it, he admonisheth us with intreaty, and perswafion, as if we did it our selves. But though the manner be thus fweet, yet with this manner there goeth an Almighty power. Therefore he doth it strongly, as comming from himfelfe, and fweetly, as the speaking is to us preferving our Nature, fo the Action is from him, which hath an Almighty power with it. As holy Bernard faith, Thou dealest sweetly with my foule in regard of my felfe (that is, thou workest upon me as a man with the words of love) yet strongly in regard of thy selfe. For except he adde strength with sweetnesse, the worke will not follow; but when there are both, an Almighty work is wrought in the foule of a Christian; and fo wrought, as the manner of mans working is preferved in a sweet and free manner, whilest he is changed from contrary to contrary, And it is also with the greatest reason that can be, in that now

he

Bernard.

he fees more reason to be good, then in the Sar. V. dayes of darkneffe he did to be naught. God works fo sweetly. God speakes to us after the manner of men, but he works in us as the great God; he speakes to us as a man in our owne language, fweetly; but he works in us almightily, after a powerfull manner, as God: fo we must understand such phrases as these, I knocke, open to me my Love, my Dove, &c. we may take further notice,

That the heart of a Christian is the house, and

Temple of Christ.

Hee hath but two houses to dwell in; the Heavens, and the heart of an humble broken-hearted 162.57.13. Ginner.

How can Christ come into the foule?

He comes into the heart by his Spirit; It is a speciall entertainment that he lookes for : open thine eares that thou mayest heare my word: thy love, that thou mayest love me more : thy joy, that thou mayest delight in me more : open thy whole foulethat I may dwell in it. A Christian should be Gods house, and arrue Christian is the true Temple of God. He left the other two Temples therefore, but his owne body, and his Church he never leaves; for a house is for a man to folace himselfe in, and to rest in, and to lay up whatfoever is precious to him: So with Christ'a man will repaire his house, so Christ will repaire our fouls, and make them better, and make them more holy and spirituall, and every way fit for fuch a guest as he is.

Observ.

Quest. Anfan

How

SER, V.

How shall we know whether Christ dwels in our

We may know by the servants what Master dwels in an house: If Christ be in the soule, there comes out of the house good speeches, and we watch the senses, so as therecomes nothing in to defile the soule, and disturbe Christ, and nothing goes out to offend God. When we heare men full of gracious sweet speeches, it is a signe Christ dwels there: If we heare the contrary, it shewes Christ dwels not there, for Christ would move the whole man to doe that which might edifie and comfort.

Againe, where Christ comes, Assistance comes there. When Christ was borne, all serusalem was in an uproare: so when Christ is borne in the soul, there is an uproare, corruption armes it selfe against Grace, there is a combate betwixt sless and Spirit, but Christ subdues the sless by little and little. Gods image is stamped upon the soule where Christis, and if we have opened unto the Lord of Glory, he will make us glorious.

Christ hath never enough of us, nor we have never enough of him, till we be in heaven, and therefore we pray, Thy Kingdome some, and till Christ comes in his Kingdome, he desires his Kingdome should come to us, open (saith he) Supenda dignatio, &c. (as he cryes out) it is a stupendious condescending, when he that hath Heavento hold him, Angels to attend him, those glorious creatures; he that hath the command of every creature, that doe yeeld presently homage

when

when he commands the Frogges, and Lice, and Six. V. all the Host of Heaven are ready to doe his will; for him to condescend, and to intreat us to be good to our owne foules, and to befeech us to be reconciled to him, as if he had offended us. who have done the wrong and not he; or as if that we had power, and riches to doe him good: Here Greatneffe beseecheth Meanneffe, Riches, Poverty, All sufficiency, Want, and Life it felfe, comes to dead drowfie foules. What a wondrous condefcending is this! Yet notwithstanding Christ youch fafes to make the heart of a finfull. fleepy man to be his House, his Temple. He knocks. and knocks here, faying, open to me, &c.

This is usefull many waves; as first, cherish. all the good conceits we can of Christ; Time will come, that the Devill will fet upon us with sharp temptations, fiery darts, temptations to despaire, and present Christ amisse, as if Christ were nor willing to receive us, when as you fee he knocks at our hearts to open to him, uleth Mercies and Indgements, the Minestery of his Spirit, and Con-(cience, and all ; Will not he then entertaine us, when we come to him, that feeks this entertainment at our hands? Certainly he will; therefore let us labour to cherish good conceits of Christ. This is the finisher and beginning of the converfion of a poore finfull foule, even to confider the infinitelove, and condescending of Christ Iesus for the good of our foules ? We need not wonder at this his willingnesse to receive us, when we first know, that God became man, happineffe

SER. V. Gal.3.13.

nesse became misery, and life it lelfe came to die, and to be a curfe for its. He hath done the greater. and will he not doe the leffe ! Therefore thinke not strange that he useth all these meanes, considering how low he descended into the wombe

of the Virgin for us, Eph. 4.9.

Now fuch confiderations as thefe being mixed with the Spirit, and fet on by him, are effectuall for the conversion of poore soules. Is there fuch love in God to become man, and to be a Sutorto woe me for my love? Surely thinks the toule then, he defires my falvation, and converfion. And to what kind of persons doth he come? None can object unworthinesse, I am poore; he comes to the poore: I am laden and wretched, Come unto me all ye that are weary and laden: I have nothing, Come and buy honey, milke, and wine, though you have nothing. He takes away all Objections. But I am flung with the fense of my fins, Blesed are they that hunger and thirft &c. But I am empty of all, Bleffed are the poore in Spirit. You can object nothing, but it is taken away by the Holy-Ghoft, wisely preventing all the Objections of a finfull foule. This is the beginning of converfion, thefe very conceits, and when we are converted, these thoughts entertained with admiration of Christs condescending are effectuall to vive Christ further entrance into the foule, whereby a more happy communion is wrought fill more and more between Christ and the soule of a Christian.

1(a.61. I. Mat. 11.28. Ifa. 55.1.

Mat. 5.3.5.

Use. 2.

Oh, but take heed that the femake nor any fe-

curc:

Mat. 23 41.

cure : For if we give not entrance to Christ, all SER. V this will be a further aggravation of our damnation. How will this justifie the sentence upon us hereafter, when Christ shall set us on the left hand, and fay, Depart from me, for I invited you to Mat. 25. come to me : I knocked at the doore of your hearts, and you would give me no entrance, Depart from us faid you, therefore now, Depart you from me. What doe prophane persons in the Church but bid Chrift depart from them, especially in the motions of his Spirit, they entertain him in the cutward roome, the braine : they know a little of Christ, but in the heart, the secret roome, he must not comet here to rule. Is it not equall, that he fould bid us, Depart yee curfed, I know you not ? you would not give entrance to me, I will not now to you; as to the foolish Virgins he speaks; and Prov. 1. 28. Wisedome knocks, and hath no entrance, therefore in times of danger they call upon her, but she rejoyceth at their destruction; Where God magnifies his mercy in this kind in (weet allurements, and inviting by Judgements, Mercies, Ministry, and Spirit, he will magnifie his Indgement after. Those that have neglected Heaven with the Prerogatives, and advantages in this kind, they shall be cast into Hell. Wee to thee Cherazin, &c. as your Mat. 17.11. know in the Gospell. This is one thing that may humble us of this place and Nation, that Chrift hath no further entrance, nor better entertainment after fo long knocking ? for the entertaining of his word is the welcomming of himfelfe,

San. V.

felfe, as it is, Coloß. 2.16. Let the word of God dwell plentifully in you. And let Chrift dwell in your hearts by faith, Ephes. 3.17. Compare those places, let the word dwel plenteoufly in you by wifedome, and let Christ dwell in your hearts by faith: For then doth Christ dwell in the heart, when the truth dwels in us; therefore what entertainment we give to his truth, we give to himselfe. Now what meanes of knocking hath hee not used among us a long time? For workes of all forts; he hath drawne us by the cords of a man, by all kinde of favours. For Mercies. How many deliverances have we had (No Nation the like, we are a miracle of the Christian world) from forraigne invafion and domesticall conspiracies at home! How many mercies doe we enjoy! Abundance together with long peace and plenty. Befides, if this would not doe, God hath added corrections with all these, in every Element, in every manner, infecti. on in the aire, Judgements in inundations : We have had rumors of warres, &c. threatenings, thakings of the rod onely, but fuch as might have awaked us: And then he hath knocked at our hearts by the example of other Nations. By what he hath done to them, he hath shewed us what he might justly have done to us, we are no better then they:

As for his Ministerial knocking, above three-score yeares we have lived under the Ministery of the Gospell, this Land hath been Gospen, a Land of light, when many other places are in darknesse, especially we that live in this Gospen,

this

SER. V.

Mat.11.17.

this place, and fuch like, where the light shines in a more abundant measure. Ministers have been sent, and variety of gifts, there hath been piping, and mourning (as Christ complaines in his time) that they were like froward children, that neither sweet piping, nor dolefull mourning would moove to be tractable to their fellowes, they had John who came mourning, and Christ comforting with blessing in his mouth, all kinde of meanes have been used.

And for the Motions of his Spirit, who are there at this time, who thus live in the Church under the Ministery, who cannot say that God thereby hath smotetheir hearts, those hard rocks againe and againe, and awaked their consciences, partly with corrections publike and personall, and partly with benefits; yet notwithstanding what little way is given to Christ? Many are indifferent and lukewarme either way, but rather incline to the worst.

Let us then confider of it, The greater means, the greater judgements afterwards, if we be not woon by them. Therefore let us labour to hold Christ, to entertaine him, let him have the best roome in our soules, to dwell in our hearts, let us give up the keyes to him, and desire him to rule our understandings, to know nothing but him, and what may stand with his Truth, Not to yeeld to any errour or corruption; let us desire that he would rule in our wils and affections, sway all, give all to him; for that is his meaning when he sayes, open to me, so that I may rule, as

SER.V.

1 Cor. 10.

Considerations inforcing us to entertaine Christ.

in mine owne house, as the husband rules in his family, and a King in his Kingdome, he will have all yeelded up to him : And he comes to beat downcall what soever is exalted against him, and that is the reason men are so loath to open unto him. They know if they open to the Spirit of God, he will turne them out of their fooles Paradice, and make them refolve upon other courles of life, which because they will not turne unto, they repell the fweet motions of the Spirit of Christ, and pull away his Graces, building bulwarkes against Christ, as lufts, strange imaginations and refolutions. Let the Ministers fay what they will, and the Spirit moove as he will, thus they live, and thus they will live. Let us take noticetherefore of all the meanes that God uferh to the state, and to us in particular, and every one labour to amend one. Every foule is the Temple, the House Christ should dwellin, let every foule therefore among us confider what meanes Christ weethto come into his foule to dwell with him and to rule there.

And what shall we lose by it? Doe weener-taine Christ to our losse? Doth he come empty? No, he comes with all Grace, his Goodnesse is a Communicative, dissure goodnesse; He comes to spread his Treasures, to enrich the heart with all Grace and strength to heare all afflictions, to encounter all dangers, to bring peace of Conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost; he comes (indeed) to make our hearts (as it were) a Heaven. Doe but consider this, he comes not for his owne ends; but to empty

his

ber that hnocketh, daniel

his goodnesse into our hearts, as a breast that de- San V. fires to empty it felfe when it is full. So this fountaine hath the fulneffe of a fountaine, which ftrives to empty his goodnesse into our fonles: he comes out of love to us. Let these considerations melt our hearts for our unkindnesse, that we fuffer him to stand so long at the doore knock-

ing, as it is faid here.

If we find not our fuits answered so soon as we would, Remember we have made him also wait for us, perhaps to humble us, and after that to encourage us, he will make us wait, for we have made him wait. Let us not give over, for certainly he that defires us to open, that he may powre out his graces upon us, he will not reject us when we come to him: If he answers us not at first, yet he will at last. Let us goe on and wait, seeing there is no one duty pressed more in Scripture then this. And we fee it is equity, He waits for no, it is good reason we should wait for him, if we have not comfort presently when we defire it, let us attend upon Christ, as he hath attended upon us, for when he comes, he comes with advantage; fo that when we wait, we lofe nothing thereby, but are gainers by it, increasing our patience. The longer we wait, he comes with the more abundant Grace and comfort in the end. and shewes himselfe rich and bountifull to them that wait upon him.

Mat.7.7. Habak. 2.3.

Ifa, 30.18.

Ifa.60.16.

Ifa.64.3. Iam.1'4.

Ifa.40.

It is the poice of my Beloved

152

SER. VI.



The fixth Sermon.

CANT. V. II.

It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, open unto me, my love, my dove, my undefiled, &c.



N the first part of this verse hath been handled the Churches owne condition which she was in, after some blessed feelings that she had of the love of Christ.

Now in the next words, the Church fets down an acknowledgement of the carriage of Christ to her in this her sleepy condition. It is the voice of my Beloved that knocks, faying, Open to me my sister, my love, my dove, &ce. She acknowledgeth Christs voice in her sleepy estate, and sets down his carriage thus, how be knocks, and then also speaks, Open to me; and then lets downe what he suffered for her, My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. And that nothing might be wanting that might moove her heart to respect this his carriage towards her, he useth sweet titles, a loving compellation, Open to me (saith he) my sister, my love, my dove my undefiled,

as fo many cords of love to draw her: fohere San. VI. wants neither loving carriage, fweet words. nor patience ; It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketb.

The Church as the takes notice of the voice of Christ, so she doth also of the meanes be weeth. and feeth his love in them all. It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, faying, Opensame, &c. Here is also another distinguishing note of a found Christian from an unfound : A fanctified Spirit fees Christ in the meanes, this is, sayes the heart, the word of Christ, and this the mercy of Christ to take such paines with my foul, to fend his Ministers, to provide his Ordinances, to give gifts to men, and men to the Church. It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh.

But we must especially understand it of the Ministeriall voice, whereby Christ doth chiefly make way for himselfe into the heart, and that by all kind of wayes dispensed therein; as gifts of all forts, some rougher, some milder, all kinde of Methods and waves in the Minestery to make way for himselfe : First of all, by the threatenings of the Law, and by terrours, as John was fent before Christ, and as the storme went before the still and calme voice, wherein God came to Elias; fo he useth all kind of courses in 1 Kin. 19.12. the Ministery, and Ministers by the direction of the Spirit turne themselves, as it were, into all shapes and fashions, both of speech and Spiritto win people to God, infomuch that God appeales to them, What sould I have done more for my church, Ifa 5.1. that I have not done? There-

Eph.4.13.

That Christs knocking is efpecially by the Ministery of the Word.

It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh.

Therefore let us take notice of this voyce of Christ in the word, and not thinke as good Sa. muel thought, that Eli fpake, when God fpake : let us thinke that God speakes to us in the Ministery, that Christ comes to woe us, and win us thereby.

And we Ministers are the friends of the Bridegroome, who are to heare what Christ faith, and would have faid to the Church, and we must pray to him, that he would teach us what to teach others. We are to procure the contract, and to perfect it till the marriage be in heaven,

that is our worke.

And you that are hearers, if you doe not regard Christs sweet voyce in the Ministery, which God hath appointed for the government of the world, know, that there is a voice that you cannot hake off, that peremptory voyce at the day of judgement, when he will fay, Goe ye carfed into bell fire, 800. And that God who delights to be filed a God bearing prayer, will not heare thee, but faith, Such a one as turnes his care away from bearing the Law, his prayer is abominable. It is a dolefull thing, that he that made us, and allureth us in the Ministery, that followes us with all evidences of his love, and addes together with the Ministery many sweet motions of his Spirit, that he should delight in the destruction of his creatures, and not endure the fight of them, Depart an ay from me ye cur fed into bell fire, &c. There are fearfe any in the Church, but Christ hath allured ar energine or other to come in, and in many he

opens

Mat. 25.

Prov. 28.9.

SER. VI.

Ad. 16, 18 Mark. 6. 20.

opens their understandings in a great measure and knocks upon their hearts, that they (as it were halfe openunto Christ, like Agrippathat faid to Paul, Thou almost perswadest meto be a Chrifian. So Herod did many things, and he heard gladly. They are halfe open, seeme to open, but are not effectually converted, but at last they fee, that further veelding will not fland with that which they resolve not to part with ; their lusts, their present condition that they make their God, and their heaven, whereupon they flut the doore againe, when they have opened it a little to the motions of Gods Spirit, they dare give no further way, because they cannot learn the first lesfon in Christs schoole, to deny themselves, and take up their croffe.

This is an undoubted conclusion, our bleffed Saviour giveth such meanes and motions of his Spirit to the vileft persons in the Church, that their owne hearts tell them, they have more meanes and fweeter motions then they yeeld to, and that the sensence of condemnation is not prosounced upon them for meerly not knowing of Christ, but upon some grounds of rebellion, in that they goe not fo farre as they are provoked, and put on by the Spirit of God, they refift the holy Spirit. There can be no resistance where there is not a going beyond the defire and will of him whom he refifteth. A man doth not relift, when he gives way as far as he is mooved. There is no wicked man in the Church, that gives formuch way as he is mooved and flirred to by the Spirit and word of God.

Away

SER. VI.

Away then with these impudent, ungracious Objections about Gods Decree for matter of Election, let us make it sure, and for any ill conceits that may rise in our hearts about that other of reprobation, let this dampe them all, that in the Church of God, he offers unto the vilest wretch so much meanes with the motions of his Spirit, as he resisting, proves inexcusable, his owne rebellion therefore being the cause of his rejection. Let men cease from cavilling, God hath that in their own breast, in the heart of every carnall man which will speake for God against him, and stop his mouth that he shall be filent, and speechlesse at the day of judgement.

Thus we see that Christ doth condescend so low as to account it almost a part of his happinesse to have our soules for a Temple to dwell in, to rule there. Therefore he makes all this earnest suit, with strong expressions what he

fuffereth.

And fince Christ beares this great and large affection to his poore Church, it may encourage us to pray heartily for the same, and to spread before God the state thereof. Why Lord? it is that part of the World that is thy sister, thy love, thy dove, thy undefiled the Communion with whom thou livest above all the world besides. It is a strong argument to prevaile with God; therefore let us commend the state of the Church at this time, or at any time with this considence, Lord, it is the Church that thou lovest. They thought they prevailed much with Christ, when they laboured to bring him

Ma . 12. 12.

Ioh 11.3 Simile

him to Lazarus, laying, Lord, He whom thou loveft San, VI is ficke. So fay we, The Church whom show loveft, that is the onelylove. In whom the love is concenterate (as it were) and gathered to a head (as though thou hadft no other love in the world but the Church) this thy love is in this state and condition. It is good to thinke of prevailing arguments not to move God fo much as our owne hearts, to firengthen our faith to prevaile with God, which is much fortified with the confideration of Christs wondrous loving expression to his poore Church. Then come to Chrift, offerthy felfe, and he will meet thee. Are not two loving well-wishers well met. When thou offerest thy felfe to him, and be feeks thy love, will be reject thee when then commest to bim that seeks thy love, and seeketh it in this passionate, affectionate manner, as he doth ! Therefore, be of good comfort, he is more willing to entertaine us then we are to come to him.

And for those that have relapsed any kinde of That the Reway, let them not be discouraged to returne again to Christ; the Church here was in a drow- be discouraged fie fleepy estate, and used him unkindly, yet he is fo patient, that he waits her leifure as it were. and faith, open to me my Sifter, my Love, &c. Tho. mar was fo untoward, that he would not believe. Vulefe he did fee the print of the nailes, &c. in Christsbody. Yet Christ was so gracious, as he condescendeth to poore Thomas, so to Peter after he was fallen, and to the Church after backfliding.

lapfed need me desperately

SEE. VI.

Open to me my Sifter, &c.

Hence observe further,

That Christ bath never enough of his Church till he hathit in Heaven, where are indeed the kiffes of the Spouse, and of Christ: In the meane while open, open still. Christ had the heart of the Spouse in some measure already, but yet there were some corners of the heart that were not so filled with Christ as they should be, he was not fo much in her understanding, will, joy, delight, and love, as he would be therefore, Open thy understanding more and more to embrace me, and divine truths that are offered thee , Open thy love, to folace me more and more: For God in Christ having condescended to the tearmes of friendship, nay to incimate tearmes of friendship in marriage with us. Therefore as the Church in herright temper, hath never enough of Christ, but defires further union, and communion still. It being the description of the people of God, that they love the appearance of Chrift, as they loved his first appearance, and waited for the confolation of I frael : fo they love his fecond appearing, and are never quiet, till he comes againe in the flesh, to confummate the marriage begun here: fo Christ also he is as desirous of them. yea they are his defires that breed their defires, Open to me my Sifter, my Lave, my Dove, &c. Againe his Love and pitty moves him to defire further to come into us: Christ knows what is in our hearts. if he be not there. There is that that fhould not be there. What is in the braine where Christ is not? a deale

2 Tim.4 18, Rev. 12.10.

a deale of worldly projects nothing worth. See VI. What is in our joy, if Christ be northere; worldly joy, which cleaves to things worse then it felfe. If a man were anatomized, and feer into. he would be ashamed of himselfe, if he did see himselfe; Christ therefore out of pitty to our foules, would not have the Devill there; Christ knowes it is good for our foules to give way to him, therefore he useth all sweet allurements, open tome my Sifter, my Love, &c. Christ hath never his fill, till he close with the foule perfectly, fothat nothing be in the foule above him, nothing equall to him, therefore open, open still.

Againe, He sets downe to move the Church the more to open to him the inconveniences that he endured, My head is filled with dew, &c. wherein he shewes what he saffered, which sufferings are of two forts: In htmfelfe : In his Mimifters. In himselfe, and in hisowne bleffed perfon what did he endure? what patience had he in enduring the refractory spirits of men when he was here? how many indignities did he digeft in his Disciples after their conversion ? Towards his latter end, his head was not onely filled with the drops, but his body filled with drops of bloud. Drops of bloud came from him, because of the anguish of his Spirit, and the sense of Gods wath for our finnes. Upon the Croffe, what did he endure there? that sense of Gods anger there was onely for our finnes. My God, my God, why Mar. 27. hast then for saken me? What should we speake of his going up and downe doing good, preaching

SER.VI.

in his owne person, setting whole nights apart for prayer; And then for what he fuffers in his Ministers ? there he knocks, and faith, openin them. And how was he used in the Apostles that were after him, and in the Ministers of the Church ever fince ? What have they endured? for he put a spirit of patience upon them. And what indignities endured they in the Primitive Church, that were the publishers of the Gospel, those sweet publishers thereof, drawing men to open to Christ, were killed for preaching. So cruell is the heart, that it offereth violence to them that love them most that love their soules-And what greater love, then the love of the foule ? yet this is the Saranicall temper and difposition of mens hearts, they hate those men most, that deale this way most truly and lovingly with them. It is not that the Gospell is such an hard message. It is the word of Reconciliation, and the word of life; but the heart hates it, because it would draw men from their present condition; and therefore, condemnation is come into the world in that men bate the light, because their works are evill. Is there any thing truly and cordially hated but Grace ? and are any persons heartily and cordially hated in the world fo much as the Promulgers and Publishers of Grace, and the Profesiors of it, because it braids most of all, and meddles with the corruptions of men, that are dearer to them then their owne foules.

Now what patience is there in Christ to suf-

Ioh.3.19.

fer himfelfe in his meffengers, and his children San. VI. to be thus used . Nor is it strange to say that Christ stands thus in his Ministers, for 1 Per. 2. 19. it is faid, That Christ by his Spirit preached in the dayes of Noah to the foules now in prifon, Christ preached in Noahs time before he was Incarnate. much more doth he preach now; and as he was patient then to endure the old World, unto whom Noah preached a hundred and twenty yeares: fo he is patient now in his Ministers, to preach still by the same Spirit, even to us still, and yet the entertainment in many places is (as Paul complaines) though the more I love you, yet the leffe I am beloved of you.

Let thefe things move us to be patient towards God and Christ, if we be corrected in any kind, confidering that Christ is so patient towards us, and to wait upon him with patience. How long hath he waited for our conversion ? how long doth he fill wait for the through giving up of our foules to him? Shall we thinke much then to wait a lit-

tle while for him?

And let this Spirit of Christ Arengthen we likewife in our dealing with others, as to beare with evill men; and as it is, 2 Tim. 2.25, 26. Towaitif Godwill at any time give them repentance. Neither may we be fo fhort spirited, that if we have not ananswer presently to give over. We should imitate Christ here, never give over as long as God continues life with any advantage & opportunity to do good to any foul, wait, if God at any time will give them grace. Open tome,my Sifter, my Love,&c. Let

a Cor. 13.13.

Ufe I.

Use 3.

SBR. VI.

Let this againe worke upon us, that our Saviour Christ bere would thus fet forth his love, and his patience in his love, in bearing with us thus under the refemblance of a filly futer that comes afar off, and fands at the doore, and knocks, that Christ should stoop thus in seeking the good of our foules. Let this win, and quicken our hearts with all readinesse and thankfulnesse to receive him when he comes to worke in our foules, confidering that Christ hath such a care of us by himfelfe, his Ministers, and the motions of his Spirit, who joynes with his Minestery; let us not therefore be carelelle of our owne foules, but let it move our hearts to melt to him. The motives may bee seene more in the particular compellations, Open to me my Sifter, my Love, &c.

My Sifter.

This was spoken of before in the former verse. The Church of God is Christs sister and spouse, we are knit to him both by Consanguinity, and by Affinity. The nearest affinity is Marriage, and the nearest consanguinity is Sister. So that there are all Bonds to knit us to Christ; Whatsoever is strong in any Bond, he knits us to him by it. Is there any love in an Huband, a Brother, a Mother, a Friend, in an Head to the members: in any thing in the world? Is there any love scattered in any relation? gather it all into one, and all that love, and a thousand times more then that, is in Christ in a more emiment manner; therefore he stiles himselse in all these sweet relations.

Mat. 12.

Sifter thut out a Brother, when the Brother

ons, to flew that he hath the love of all. Willa SER. VI.

comes to vifit her, and doe her all good ? is this unkindnesse even in Nature to looke strangely upon a man that is nearea kin, that comes and faith, Open to me my Sifter ? If the Sifter should thut out the Brother, were it not most unpaturall. And is it not monftrous in Graces when our Brother comes for our good, and in pitty to our foules to let him fland without doores? Remember that Christ hath the same affections, to account us Brothers and Sifters now in Heaven, as he had when he was upon the Earth : For after his Refurrection (faith he to his Disciples) I goe to my God and to your God, to my Father, and to your Father, he cals himselfe our Brother, having one common Father in Heaven, and one Spirit, and one inheritance, &c. This is a sweet relation, Christ being our Brother, his heart cannot but melt towards us in any affliction. Iofeph diffembled a while out of politicke wisedome, but because he had a Brothers heart to Benjamin, therefore at last he could not hold, but melted into teares, though he made his countenance, as though he had not regarded. So our Tofeph now in Heaven, may feem to withdraw all tokens and fignes of Brotherly love from us, and not to owne us; but it is only in shew, he is our Brother still, his heart first or last will melt towards his Brethren to their wonderfull comfort, My Si-

Joh. 20.17.

Gen.43.

M 2

fter. &cc.

My

My Love,

My Love.

That word we had not yet. It is worthy also a little standing on; for all these foure words be (as it were) the attractive cords to draw the Spouse, not onely by shewing what he had suffered, but by sweet titles, My Love, my Dove.

What had Christ no love but his Spouler did his love goe out of his owne heart to her (as it were?) It is strange, yet true, Christslove is so great to his Church and Children, and so continuall to it, that his Church and People, and every Christian soule is the seat of his love, That love in his owne breast being in them, they are his love, because he himselfe is there, and one with them.

He loves all his Creatures, they have all fome beames, of his goodnesse, Which he must needs love, therefore he loves them as Creatures; and as they be more or lesse capable of a higher degree of goodnesse; but for his Church and Children, they are his love indeed.

But what is the ground of fuch love?

1. He loves them as he beholds them in his Fathers choife, as they are Elected of God, and givenume himfelfe in Election. Thing they are, thou gavest them me: Christ looking on us in Gods Election and choice, loves us.

2. Againe, He loves us, because be seen owner Graces in us, he loves what is his in us. Before we be actually his; he loves us with a love of good will, to wish all good to us; but when we have anything of his Spirit, that our natures are alte-

1 Cor, 1 L.7.

red and changed; he loves us with a love of the SER. VI. intimatest friendship; with the love of an Head, Husband, Friend, and what we can imagine; he loves his owne Image. Paul faith, That the Wife is the glory of her Huband; because whatsoever is in a good Husband, the Wife expresseth it by reflection: So the Church is the glory of Christ, the refleds his excellencies, though in a weake meafure they flew forth bis Vertues or prayles, as Peter speaks, thus he fees his owne Image in her, and the Holy-Ghost in his Church, he loves her, and thefe in her: so as whether we regard the Father, or himselfe, or his Spirit, the Church is his Love.

If we consider also what he hath done and suffered for her, we may well fay the Church is his Love. Besides the former favours (not to speake of Election)he choosed us before we were, Intime he did chuse us by actuall Election, by which he called us we had an existence, but we resisted he called us when werefifted; and then also he justified us, and cloathed us with his owne Righteousnesse, and after feeds us with his own body. As the foule is the most excellent thing in the world, so he hath provided for it the most excellent ornaments. It hath food and ornaments proportionable. What love is this, that he should feed our foules with his owne body, and cloathe us with his owne Righteousnesse. He loved me (faith Paul) what was theeffect of his love ! He gave himselfe for me. He gave himselfe both that we might have a Righteoufnesse to cloathe us 3.

Gal. 2. 30.

with

Sar. VI.

with in the fight of God, and he gave himfelfe, that he might be the bread of life, My flesh is meat indeed, and my blond is drinke indeed. The guilty, the felfe-accusing soul feeds upon Christ dying for its finnes. Againe, Rev. 1.6. you have his love fet forth, He loved us, and how doth he witheffe it? He bath washed us with bis owne blond, and bath made us Kings and Priefts, &c. the like you have, Ephelis . He loved us, and gave himfelfe a hveet Sacrifice to God for us. When this world is at an end, we shall see what his love is ; he is not fatisfied, till we be all in one place. What doth he pray forto his Father, Joh. 17.24. Father I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, &c. run through all the whole course of Salvation, Election, Vocation, Inflification, Glorification, you shall see his love in all of them. But it were an infinite argument to follow, to shew the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, and it is too large for us to know all the dimensions of it, to see the height, breadth, depth, and length of it, which we should ever thinke, speake, and meditate of because the soule is then in the most fix temper to ferve, love, and glorifie God, when it is most apprehensive of his great love.

Eph. 4.16.

Deductions on of the word Love.

This phrase imports diverse things, That there is no saving love to any out of the Church, which is his love. It is (as it were) confined in the Church, as if all the beames of his love met in that center, as we see when the beames of the Sunne meet in aglasse, they burne, because many are

there

15/2.

there united. So in the Church all his love doth Sax. VI.

Then the Church is his love also, because whatsoever she hath or hopes for, is from his love, and is nothing but his love. The Church as it is a Church, is nothing but the love of Christ. That there is a Church so endowed, so graced, so full of the hope of glory, it is out of his love.

And for the properties of it, It is a feelove, a preventing love; he loved us before ever we could love him; he loved us when we refifted him, and were his enemies.

It is a most tender love, as you have it, Isa. 49.15. Can a mother forget her sucking childe, if she should yet will not I forget thee? thou art written on the palmes of my hands, &cc. He hath us in his heart, in his eye, in his hand, in a mothers heart, and beyond it; he hath a tender eye and a powerfull hand to maintaine his Church.

It is a most transcendent, and carefull love, all comparisons are under it.

And it is a most intimate inviscible love, that nothing could quench it, as we see here the Church droupeth, and had many infirmities, yet she is Christs love, so that the love of Christ is a kind of love that is unconquerable, no water will ever quench it, no fin of ours, no infirmity: So as it is very comfortable that the Church considered under infirmities, is yet the love of Christ, I steep, but my beart waketh, yet Christ comes with my Love, my Dove, &c.

Properties of it.

2.

Deut.33.2.

3.

4.

M 4

But

Sen. VI. Quell.

Anfw.

But what cannot Christ see matter of weaknesse, finfulnesse, hatred, and dislike in the Church?

Oh yes, to pitty, help, and heale it, but not at all to diminish his love, but to manifest it so much the more. His love is a tender love, sensible of all things wherewith we displease him. vet it is so invincible and unconquerable, that it overcomes all. Againe, he sees ill indeed in us, but he fees in us some good of his owne also, which moves him more to love, then that that is ill in us, moves him to hate; for what he fees of ours, he sees with a purpose to yanguish, mortifie, and eat it out ; the Spirit is as fire to confume. it; He is as water to wash it, but what he fees of his owne, he fees with a purpose to increase it more and more, and to perfect it, therefore he fayes my Love, notwithstanding that the church was afleep.

Use.

This therefore serves greatly for our comfort, to search what good Christ by his Spirit hath wrought in our hearts, what faith, what love, what sanctified judgement, what fire of holy affections to him, and to the best things? O let us value our selves by that that is good, that Christ hath in us. We are Christs love notwithstanding we are sleepy, if we be displeased with this our state, that as Christ dislikes it, so if we by the Spirit dislike it, the matter is nor what sin we have in us, but how we are affected to it. Have we that illinus, which is unly the griefe of our hearts and soules, which is Christ dislikes, so

we abhorre it, and would be purged, and rid of Sax:VI. it; and it is the griefe of our hearts and foules that we cannot be better, and more lovely in Christs everthen let us not be difcouraged . For Christ effectnes of his Church highly, even as his very love, even at that time when she was sleepy. And may teach us in time of temptation not to hearkento Satan, who then moves us to looke altogether upon that which is naught in us, thereby to abate our love to Christ, and our apprehenfion of his to us; for he knowes if we be fenfible of the love of Christ to us, we shall love him againe. For love is a kind of fire, an active quality, which will fet us about glorifying God, and pulling downe Sarans kingdome: As we say in nature (fire doth all) what worke almost can a man worke without fire, by which all inflroments are made and heated, &cc. So grace doth all with love & God first doth manifest to our soules his love to us in Christ, and quicken us by his Spirit, witnessing his love to us wherewith hee warmes our hearts, kindles and inflames them fo with love, that we love him againe, which love hath a constraining sweet violence to put us upon all duties, to fuffer, to doe, to refift any thing. If a man be in love with Chrift, what will be harsh to him in the world ? the Devill knowes this well enough, therefore one of his maine engines and temptations is to weaken our hearts in the sence of Gods love and of Christstherefore let us beas wife for our foules as he is subtleand politicke avaint them as watchfull for our own comfort.

My Lorge. 170 comfort, as he is to discomfort us, and make us Sen. VI. despaire. Let us be wise to gather all the arguments of Christs love that we can. But bow hall we know that Christ loves us in this peculiar manner? First, Search what course hetakes and bath taken to draw thee nearer unto him ; be chaftifeth every one that he loveth. Scasonable corrections Heb. 12. fanctified are a fign of Christslove, when he wil not fuffer us to thrive in finne, when we cannot fpeake not doe amiffe; but either he lasheth us in our conscience for it, and by his Spirit checks us. or elfe firs up others, one thing or other to make us out of love with fin. Againe, we may gather Christs love by this. if we have any love to divine things, and can fet a great price upon the best things, upon the word because it is Christs word upongrace, prizing the image of Christ, and the new creature. when we can fet an high value upon communion with Christ, the sense of his love in our hearts, and all fpiritual prerogatives, and excellencies above all things, this is an excellent argument of Christs love to us; Our love is but a re-Acction of his, and therefore if we have love to any thing that is good, we have it from him first. If a wall that is cold become bot, we say, the Sunne, of necessity must shine on it first, because it is nothing but cold stone of it selfe. So if our hearts, that are naturally cold be heated with the love of divine things, certainly we may fay, Christ hath shined here first a for naturally our

hearts

13/6

hearts are of a cold temper, there is no fuch SER. VI. thing as spirituall love growing in our natures and hearts.

You have many poore foules helped with this, who cannot tel whether Christ loves them or no; but this helps them a little, they can finde undoubted arguments of their love to Christ, his Image and fervants, and of relishing the word, though they find much corruption; and this their love to divine things, telsthem by demonstrations from the effects, that Christ loves them, because there is no love to divine and supernaturall things without the love of Christ first. And the graces in our hearts, they are love tokens given to the Spoule. Common favours he gives, as Abraham gifts to his servants and others, but speciall gifts to his Spouse: If therefore there be any grace, a tender and fost heart, a prizing of heavenly things, love to Gods people and truth, then we may comfortably conclude Christ loves us, not only because they are restections of Gods love, but because that they are jewels and ornaments that Christ onely bestowes upon his Spouse, and not upon reprobates, such precious tewels as thefe.

By discovering his secrets to us, for that is an argument of love. Doth Christ by his Spirit difcover the fecret love he hath borne to us before all worlds ? doth he discover the breast of his Father, and his own heart to us ? this discovery of fecret affections, of entire love sheweth our happy flates for that is one prerogative of friend-

fhip,

SER.VI.

thip, and the chiefest discovery of secrets, when he gives us a particular right to truths, as our owne, that we can goe challenge them, these are mine, these belong to me, these promises are mine, this discovery of the secret love of God, and of the interest we have in the promises, is a signe that Christ loves us, and that in a peculiar manner we are his love.

Ofe 1. Reproofe.

Let us be like our bleffed Saviour, that where we fee any faving goodnesse in any, let us love them for should not our love meet with our Saviours love. Shall the Church of God be the love of Christ, and shallit be our harred ! Shall a good Christian be Christs love, and shall he be the object of my harred and fcorne; can we imirate a better patterne ? O let us never thinke our estate to be good, except every childe of God be our love as he is Christs love ! Can I love Christ, and cannot I love him in whom I fee Christ : It is a figne that I hate himselfe, when Thate his Image. It is to be wondred ar, that the Devill hath prevailed with any fo much, as to thinke they should be in a good estate, when they have hearts rifing against the best people, and who as they grow in grace, fo they grow in their diflike of them. Is herethe Spirit of Christ: And let them likewife be here seproved, that are glad to fee any Christian halt, flip, and goe awry. The best Christians in the world have that in part, which is wholly in another man, he hath self in him. Shall we unerly distaste a Christian for that ? The Church was now in affectly condition.

Reproofe.

dition, and yet notwithstanding Christ takes not Saa, VII. the advantage of the weaknesse of the Church to casheere, and to hate her ; but he pittles her the more, and takes a courfe to bring her againe into a good flate and condition. Let us not therefore be glad at the infirmities and failings of any. that discover any true goodnesse in them ; it may be our owne case ere long, it casts them not out of Christs love, but they dwell in his love still: why should we then cast them out of our love and affections ! Letthem be our love ftill asthey are the love of Christ, notwithstanding their infirmities.



The feventh Sermon.

While makes Min My Work me shill

My Love, my Dove, my Vindefiled ; for my bead is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on ? I have washed my feet how shall I defle them?

Hat the life of a Christian is a perpetuall conflicting, appeares evidently in chis Docke, the pallages whereof joy-ned with our owne experiences, fufficiently declare

Sav. VII

clare what combats, tryals, and temptations the Saints are Subje & unto after their new birth and change of life, now up, now downe, now full of good resolutions, now againe fluggish and flow, not to be waked, nor brought forwards by the voice of Christ, as it was with the Church here. the will not out of her fleep to open unto Christ, though he call and knocke, and fland waiting for entrance. She is now defirous to pitty her felfe. and needs no Peter to ftir her up unto it, the fesh of it felfe is prone enough to draw backe, and make excuses to hinder the power of grace from its due operation in us. She is laid along (as it were)to reft her; yet is not the fo afleep, but the discernes the voice of Christ, but up and rise she will not.

Ioh.3.6.

Thus we may fee the truth of that speech of our Saviour verified, That which is born of the spirit is Spirit. The shelf puls her backe, the Spirit would raise her up to open to Christ, he in the meane while makes her inexcusable, and prepares her by his knocking, waiting, and departing, as for a state of surther Hamiliation, so for an estate of surther Exaltation. But how lovingly doth he speake to her?

Hy my Love

Open ante memy Love.

He cals her my Love, especially for two respects, partly because his love mus feeled upon her, it was in his owne breast, but inrested not there, but seared it selfe upon, and in the heart of his Spoule, so that she became Christs love. Wee

TOOM

knowtheheart of a lover is more where it loves, San. VII. then were it lives (as we use to speak) and indeed, there is a kind of a goirg out (as it were) to the thing beloved, with a heedlefnesse of all other things, where the affection is in any excesse, it carries the whole foule with it.

But befides this, when Chrift faith my love, he shewes, that as his love goes and plants, and fears it felfe in the Church, foir is united to that. and is not scattered to other objects. There are beames of Gods generall love scattered in the whole world; but this love, this exceeding love is onely fastened upon the Church. And indeed there is no love comparable to this love of Christ, which is above the love of Women, of Father, or Mother, if we confider what course he takes to shew it : For there could be nothing in the world so great to discover his love, as this gift, and gift of himselfe, And therefore he gave himselfe (the best thing in Heaven or in Earth) withall to flew his love, The Father gave bim; When he was God equall withhis Father, he loved his Church, and gave himfelfe for it; how could be discover his love better then to take our Nature to flew how he loved us how could be come nearer to us, then by being incarnate, fo to be bone of our bone, & flesh of our flesh, & rook our nature to flew how he loved it? Love drawes things nearer wherefeever it is ; It drew him out of Heaven to the Wombe of the Virgin, there to be incarnate, and after that, when he was borne not onely to be a man, but a miferable man, because

Eph. 5 30.

San.VII.

we could not be his Spoule unleffe he purchased us by his death. We must be his Spoule by a fatisfaction made to Divine Inflice. God would not give us to him, but with falving his Inflice. What fweet love is it to heale us not by fearing or lancing but by making a plaister of his own bloud. which he fled for those that fled his in malice and hatred. What a wondrous love is it, that he should power forth teares for those that shed his bloud o Ternsalem, Jerusalem, &cc. that he praved for those that persecuted him ; and what wondrous love is it now that he sympathizeth withus in Heaven, accounting the harme that is done to the least member he hath, as done to himfelte: Saul, Saul, why perfecuteft thou me ? and that he should take us into one Body with himfelfesto make one Christ and he doth not content himselfe with any thing he can doe for us here; but his defire is that we may be one with him more and more, and be for ever with him in the Heavens, as you have it in that excellent

Now this should stirus up to be fully persuaded of his love, that loves us so much. Christs love in us, is as the loadstone to the yron, our hearts are heavy and downwards of themselves. We may especially know his love by this, that it drawes us upwards, and makes us heavenly minded, it makes us desire further and surther communion with him, still there is a magneticall attractive force in Christs love, where lover it is, it drawes the heart and affections after it.

prayer, John 17.24.

And

Mat. 13.37.

A& 9-4.

U/6 2.

Andwe may know from hence one Argument | Sen. VII. to prove the flability of the Saints, and the immortality of the foule, because Christ cals the Church his Love. The want of love again (where ir is entire, and in any great measure) is a misery. Christtherefore should suffer, if those he hath planted his love upon, whom he lovestruly either should fall away for ever, or should not be immortall for ever. Christ will not lose his love; and as it is an argument of persevering in grace, fo is it of an everlafting being that this foule of ours hath, because it is capable of the love of Christ, seeing there is a sweet union, and communion between Christ and the foule. It should make Christ miserable (as it were) in Heaven, the place of happinesse, if there should not be a meeting of him and his Spoule, there must therefore be a meeting, which marriage is for ever, that Hofes both may be for ever happy one in another.

Let us often warme our hearts with the confideration hereof, because all our love is from this love of his. Oh the wonderfull love of God. that both such transcendent Majesty, and such un infinite love should dwell together (We say) Majeffy and Love never dwell together, because, Love is an abasing of the soule to all services. But herein it is falle; for here Majefty and Love dwell together in the heart of one Christ, which Majefly hath stooped as low, as his Almighty power could give leave. Nav, it was an Almighty powerthat he could floop to low, and yet be God keeping his Majesty still. For God to become

man.

Ule 2.

SER. VII.

man, to hide his Majesty for a while, not to be knowne to be God, and to hide fo farre in this nature, as to die for us. What an Almighty power was this, that could goe so low, and yet preferve himselfe God still ? yet this we see in this our bleffed Saviour, the greatest Majesty met with the greatest abasement that ever was, and all out of love to our poore foules. There was no stooping, no abasement that was ever so low as Christ was abased unto us, to want for a time even the comfort of the presence of his Father. There was an union of Grace, but the union of folace and comfort that he had from him, was fuspended for a time, out of love to us, for he had a right in his owne person to be in Heaven prefently. Now for him to live fo long out of Heaven, and oft times, especially towards his suffering to be without that folace (that he might be a facrifice for our finnes) to have it suspended for a time, what a condescending was this! It is said, Plal. 112.6. that God floops to behold the things done here below. It is indeed a wondrous condescending that God will looke upon things below; but that he would become man, and out of love to fave us, fuffer as he did here, this is wondrous humility to aftonishment. We thinke humility is not a proper grace becomming the Majesty of God: So it is not indeed, but there is some resemblance of that grace in God, especially in Christ, that he should to reveale himselfe, vaile himselfe with flesh, and all our of love to us. The confideration of these things is wondrous effectuall, Quall, as to strengthen Faith, fo to kindle Love. Let these be for a taste to direct our meditations herein. It followes.

My Dove.

We know when Christ was baptized, the Holy-Ghost appeared in the shape of a Dove(as a symbole of his presence) to discover thus much, That Chrift should have the property and disposition of a Dove, and be meeke and gentle. For indeed he became man for that end to be a merciful Saviour. Learne of me, for I am meeke and lowly. And I will not quench the smoaking flaxe, nor breake the bruifed reed, &c. faid he ; and therefore the Spirit appeared upon him in the shape of a Dove : As likewife, To shew what his office should be: for even as the Dove in Noahs Arke was fent out, and came home against othe Arke with an Olive Branch, to shew that the waters were abated: So Christ was to preach deliverance from the deluge of Gods anger, and to come with an Oliveleafe of peace in his mouth, and reconciliation, to shew that Gods wrath was appealed. When he was borne, the Angels fung, Glory to God on high, onearth peace, and good will Luk. 2.14. towards men: Now as Christ had the Spirit in the likeneffe of a Dove : So all that are Christs, the Spoule of Christ, have the disposition of Christ, that Spirit that framed him to be like a Dove, frames the Church to be a Dove, as the ountment Pfal. 133-3. that was powred on Aarons head, it ran downe upon the lowest skirts of his garments.

Now the Church is compared to a Dove; N 2 partly,

Mat . 2.

Mat. 11.10.

Mar. 12.20.

Sea. VII.

That every
Creature hath
in it some beam
of the Majesty
of God.

Properties of the Dove.

1.
Meekneffe.

Pfal.39.2.

parely, for the disposition that is and should be in the Church resembling that creature. And parely also, For that the Church is in a mournful suffering condition, 1. For the like disposition as is found in a Dove. There is some good in all creatures; there is no creature but it hath a beame of Gods Majesty, of some Attribute, but some more then others. There is an Image of vertue even in the inferiour creatures. Wherefore the Scripture sends us to them for many vertues; as the sluggard to the Ant: And indeed we may see the true persection of the first Creation, the state of it more in the creatures then in our selves, for there is no such degeneration in any creature as there is in man.

Now that which in a Dove the Scripture aimes at, We foodd refemble a Dove in, is his meeknesse especially. The Church is meeke both to God and Man, not given to murmurings and revengement; meeke, that is, I beld my songue without murmuring (as it is in the Pfalme) I was dumbe, &c. which is a grace that Gods Spirit frames in the heart of the Church, and every particular Christian, even to be meeke towards God by an haly Glence: And likewise rowards men to put on the Bowels of meeknesse, as we are exharted, Colos. 3.12. As the Elect of God put on the Bowels of meeknesse and compassion, &c. Hereby we shall shew our selves to be Christs, and to have the Spirit of Christ. And this grace disposeth us to a nearer communion with Godthen other graces: It is a grace that God most delights in, and would

I Pet. c. c.

would have his Sponfeto be adorned with, as is Sak. VII shewed, I Per,3.4. where the Apostle tels women, it is the best jewell and ornament that they can weare, and is with God of great price. Atofin Namb. 12.3. we read was a mighty manin prayer ; and a fpeciall meanes to help and fit him thereunto, was because he was the meekest man on earth. And therefore, Zeph. 2.1,2. Seeke the Lord, feeke meck neffe. And it fits a man for communion with God. For God refifteth the proud, and giveth grace to the meeke and humble, It is a grace that empties the foule of felfe-conceit, to thinke amons felfe unworthy of any thing, and to makes it est acion; low, and firfor God to fill with a larger measure of his Spirit; it takes away the roughnesse and swelling of the soule, that keeps our God and gracestherefore inthat grace we must especially belike this meeke creature, which is no vindicative creature, that hath no way to revenge it felfe.

Againe, It is a simple creature without quite, it hath no way to defend it felf, but only by flight. There is a simplicity that is sinfull, when there is no mixture of wisedome in it. There is a simplicity, that is a pure simplicity, and so God is simple, which simplicity of God is the ground of many other Attributes: Forthercupon he is Eternall, because there is nothing conviary in him, there is no mixture in him of any thing opposite: fo that is a good simplicity inus, when there is no mixture of fraud, no duplicity in the foule; A double hearted man is incomplaint west un thatte in

Tam,1.8,

San. VII.

all his mayes. Now simplicity as it is a vertue, fo we must imitate the Dove in it, for there is a sinfull Dove-like fillineffe : For Hofea 7.11. Ephraim is faid there to be like a filly Dove without heart. they call to Egypt, they goe to Affria. There is a fatall simplicity usually going before destruction, when we hate those that defend us, and account them enemies, and relie more upon them that are enemies indeed then upon friends. So it was with Ephraim before his destruction, he was a filly Dove without heart, he called to Egypt and ment to Afyria (falle friends) that were enemies tothe Church of God; yet they trufted them more then God or the Prophets. Men have a world of tricks to undermine their friends, to ruine them, and to deferve ill of those that would withall their hearts deferve well of them, when yet in the meane time they can gratifie the enemy, please them, and hold correspondency with them, as here Ephraim did. Ephraim is a filly Dove, &c. This therefore is not that which we mustaimeat; but to be simple and children concerning evill, but not in ignorance and fimplicity that way.

Fairbfulne fe.

Againe, this creature is a faithfull creature, that is mainly here aimed at it is faithfull to the mate: So the Christian foule by the Spirit of God, it is made faithfull to Christ, it keeps the judgement chaste, is not tainted with errours and sinnes, he keeps his affection chaste likewise, sets nothing in his heart above. Christ, whom bath bein Heaven but him, and what is there in Barth he desires be

PG1.79.35.

fides

Christ is brought in like a Virgin contracted, but the Romish Church like a whore. Therefore the Church of God must take heed of the Romane Church, forthat is not a Dove, we must be Virgins, who must keep chaste soules to Christ, as

fides him. You know in the Revelation, the Sponfeef Sax. VIL

you have it, Rev. 14.4. Thefethat follow the Lamb. whereforver he goeth, they have not defiled themfelves with women, the meaning is spirituall, name. ly that they have not defiled themselves with Idolatry and spirituall fornication; they have chafte hearts to Christ: so in this respect they resemble the Dove. These therefore that draw away from the love of Religion to mixture, to

Neatneße.

things

Simile.

inviolate to him. Againe, this creature is of a neate disposition, it will not lodge where it shall be troubled with stench, and annoyed that way, and likewife feeds neatly on pure graine, not upon carrion, as you fee in the Arke, when the Raven was fent out, it lights upon carrion, of which there was then plenty, and therefore never came into the wake againe : But the Dove, when the went out would | Gen. 8.7. not light upon carrion, or dead things, and fo finding no fit food came backe againe to the Arke. So the Christian soule in this respect is like a Dove, that will not feed upon worldly carrion or finfall pleasures, but upon Christ and foint N 4

be meretrices, and harlots in Religion, they are not Christs Doves, as farreas they yeeld to this, it is an argument that they have false hearts; Christs Church is a Dove, the keeps close and

5.

Simue.

162,60.8.

things. The foule of a carnall, and a natural man ufeth to feed upon duft, earth and earthlythings, when the foule of a true Christian, that hath the rafte of grace feeds many lewill not feed on that which is base and earthly but upon heavenly

and spirituall things.

It is Greenta with, a bird that loves communion and fellowship, as the Prophet Speaks, Who are the le shar flocke to the windowes as Dover for fo they afe to flocke to their houses by companies. So the children of God love the communion and fellowship one of another, and keep severed from the world, as footle as ever they are fepararedfrom it; delighting in all thefe of the fame nature. Dove will confort with Doves Christians with Christians and none effe, they can rediffino other company, thele and fuch like propermis may profitably be confidered of the Dove. The much standing upon these, were to wrong the intendment of the Spirit of God; to negled them altogether, were asmuch. Therefere we have touched upon fome properties

Now, For the fufferings of the Church, it is like a Dove in this The Dwe k molefted by all the birds forey, it being the common prey of all other rachous blids. So the poore Church of Godis perfective and indicated, obtiling that wings tike a Dove See. (fifth holy David) It is an old speech, and it is for ever true, This crower and holy effect of the place of the buildment that highly light of walkey of white of light

on Doves : Thus Gods Dove, Gods Churchis San. VII. ufed.

But, What defence bath Gods poore Church? why no defence: But hairent it at with

Obice

First, flight, even as the Dove hath nothing but flight, it hath no talents to wound, bur it hath flight : fo we are to fly to God as to our mountaine, fly to the Arkethat God may rake us in. The Church of God hath no other refuse but to be housed in God and Christ, he is our Arke.

Prov. 18.10.

Secondly and to mourne, as Hezekiah faith of himselfe, Ifa. 38. He mourned as a Dove, and chattered like & Crane. The flate of the Church of God is like the Turtles, to mourne in all afflictions, defertions, and molestations of wicked men, to mourne to God who heares the bemonings of his owne Spirit in them , and woe to all other birds, the birds of prey, when the Turtles doe mourne (because of their cruelty) it is a presage of ruine to them, when they force the Turtle to fortowand mourning. To sorby High die

And then thirdly, they have another refuge besides flight and mourning, which is to build high from vermine that would otherwise molest them. Inflinct teacheththem thus to escape their enemies by building high, and foro feeure themfelves: So there is in Gods children a gracious infline put, an Antipathy to the enemies of it, which tends to their fafety, in that they mingle notthemselves with them, And likewise, God breeds in them a familiarity with himselfe, and Airs

186 My Vndefiled. SER. VII. ftirs them to build in him as on a rocke, to be fafe in him. But you will object, If the Church of God be Obiet. his Dove, why is it so with it as it is, that God should suffer his Love and his Dove, and his Turtle thus (as it were) to be preyed upon, Give Pfal.74.19. not the soule of thy Turtle to the beafts (faith the Pfalmit) If the Church were Gods Dove, he would effective more of it then he doth, and not fuffer it to be perfecuted thus? God never forfakes his Dove, but is an Arke for it to Ay too, a Rocke for it to build on. The Dove hath alwayes are tuge in God, and in Christ in the worlt time. You have a notable place for this, Pfal. 68.13. Though you have lien among the pots, (that is) fineared and fullied; yet they fall be as the wines of a Dove covered with filver, and her feathers with yellow gold, when the Almighty feattered Kings in it, it was white as the snow in Salmen. So though the Church of God lies among the po's a while all smeared, and foiled, and fullied with the ill usage of the world; yet as long as it keeps it felfe a Dove, unspotted of the filth of the world and finne, though it bee fineared with theill usage thereof, we see what God promifeth here; Tet hall they be at the wings of a Dove covered with fibber and her feathers with yellow gold. So God will bring forth his Dode with glory out of all thefeabalements at length. So much fortheticle of Dove: It followes, du or padefiled as latingdann Vadefiled is a high word to be applied to the Church

Church of God here, for the Church groaning San VII under infirmities, to be counted perfect and undefiled; but Christ who judgeth aright of his Church, and knowes best what she is ; Heyet thus judgeth of her. But how is that? The Church is Vndefiled (especially) in that it is the Spouse of Christ, and cloathed with the robes of his Righteonsneffe. For there is an exchange fo soone as ever we are united to Christ, our sinnes are upon him, and his Righteousnesse is made ours; and therefore in Christ the Church is undefiled. Christ himselfe the second Person is the first lovely thing next the Father, and in Christ all things as they have relation to Him are loved, as they are in Him. Christs humane Nature is next loved to the second Person; it is United, and is first pure, holy, and beloved: Then because the Church is Christ mysticall, it is near to him, and (in a manner, as near as that facred Body of his, both making up one Christ mysticall, and so is amiable, and beloved even of God himselfe, who bath pure eyes; yet in this respect lookes upon the Church as Vndefiled.

Christ and his Church are not to be confidered as two, when we speake of this undefiledneffe, but as one. And the Church having Christ with all that is Christs, they have the field, and the pearle in the field together; and Christ giving himselfe to the Church, he gives his Righteousnesse, his perfection, and holines, all is the Chur-

ches.

But how can it be the Churches, when it

SVE VII. is not in the Church, but in Christ?

It is fafe for the Church that it is in Chrift. who is perfect and Vndefiled for us, to make us appeare fo: And fo it is in Christ the second Adam for our good: it is not in him as another person: but it is in Him, as the Churches head, that make both one Christ. The hand and the foot see not: but both hand and foot have benefit by the evethat fees for them. There is no member of the body understands, but the head does all for them. Put the cafe we have not absolute Righteoufnelle and undefilednelle in our owne natures and perfors inhering in us. Yet we have it in Christ that is one with us, who hath it for our good. It is out : For all the comfort and good that we may have by it; and thereupon, The Churchen Christ is undefiled; yea even then when it feeles its owne defilements. And here arifeth that wondrous contradiction that is found in a beloevers apprehension. The nature of faith is to apprehend Righteoufneffe, in the fenle of finne; Happinelle, in the lense of milery, and favour in the fenfe of difpleafure.

And the ground of it is ; Because that at the fame time, the foule may be in some measure defiled init felfe, and yet notwithstanding be unde-Medan her head and husband Christ. Hence the emile forde, when it feeles corruption and finne, yet notwithstanding doth fee it selfe holy, and cleane in Christ the Head, and fo at once there is a conscience of fin, and no more conscience of And as the Apollie faith, Heb. 16.2. when we be

ceve

leeve in Christ, and are purged with his bloud, San. VII. that is, there is no more guilt of fin binding over to eternall damnation, yet notwithstanding alwayes there is a conscience of sinne; for we are guilty of infirmities, And if we fay we have no fin. we lye and deceive our felves.

But, How can this be that there fould be confer ence of finne, and no conscience of fin, a simper, and yet

a perfect Saint and undefiled?

The Conscience knowes its owne imperfection, to it is defiled, and accuseth of finne . And ac it looks to Christ, so it fees it felfe pure, and purged from all fin; Here is the conquelt fight, and the victory of Faith in the deepest foole of finne, pollution and defilement in our feldes ; at the fametime to fee an absolute and petred Righte. oufneffe in Tefus Chrift. Herein is evenche triumph of Faith whereby it answers God. And Christ who fees our imperfections (but it is to purge and clenfe them away, not to damne us for them)at the fame time he fees us in his own love. cloathed with his Righteousnesse, as one with himselfe endowed with whatsoever he hath, his fatisfaction and obedience being ours, as verily as any thing in the world is. Thus he looks on us, and thus faith looks upon him too, and together with the fight and fenfe of finne, at the fame time, it apprehends Righteoufnelle, perfect Righteousnesse, and so is undefiled. This is the maine point in Religion, and the comfort of Christians to fee their perfection in Christ Iefus. And to be loft in themselves (asit were) and

I loh, 1.10.

Objett.

Anfw.I.

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to be only found in him not baving their own Righteousnesses the Righteousnesse of God in him. This is a mystery which none knowes but a beleeving foule; none see corruption more, none see themselves freed more, they have an inward fight to fee corruption, and an inward faith to fee God takes not advantage at it. And furely there can be no greater honour to Christ then this, in the sense of sin, of wants, imperfections, staines, and blemishes; yet to wrap our selves in the Righteousnesse of Christ God-man, and by faith being thus covered with that absolute Righteoulnesse of Christ, with boldnesse to goe cloathed in the garments of this our elder Brother to the Throne of Grace. This is an honour to Christ, to attribute so much to his Righteousnesse, That being cloathed therewith, we can boldly breake through the fire of Gods justice, and all those terrible Attributes, when we see them all(as it were) fatisfied fully in Christ: For Christ with his righteousnesse could go through the justice of God, having satisfied it to the full for us. And we being cloathed with this his Righteousnesse and satisfaction, may go through too.

But besides that, there is another undefilednes in the Church, in respect to which she is called undefiled, that is, in purity of disposition, tending to persection. And God respects her according to her better part, and according to what he will bring her in due time. For we are chosen unto persection, and to be holy in his sight, and persection, and to be holy in his sight, and persection.

featly

feely holy, undefiled and pure, we are not cho- Sax. VII. fen to weake beginnings.

In choosing us, what did God aime at ? Did he aime at these imperfect beginnings to reft there ? No, we were elected and chosen to perfection: For as it is in this naturall life, God purposed that we should not only have all the limbs of men, but grow from infancy to activeneffe and perfection: As God at first intended so much for our bodies, no question he intends as much also for the foule, that we should not onely have the lineaments of Christianity, a sanctified judgement with affections in part renewed; but he hath chosen us to perfection by degrees. As the feed first lyes rotting in the ground, then growes to a stalke, and then to an eare : So Gods wifedome shines here by bringing things by degrees to perfection and undefilednesse. His wisedome will have it thus, or else his power might have it otherwaies, because he will have us to live by Faith, to trust his mercy in Christ, and not to the undefilednesse that is begun in us, but to admire that which we have in Christ himfelfe.

And indeed it is the charecter of a judicious beleeving Christian soul, that he can set a price, and value the Righteousnesse of Christ out of himselfe, labouring, living and dying, to appeare in that, and yet to comfort and fustaine himselfe during this conflict and fight between the flesh and the Spirit, that in time this inherent Grace shall be brought to perfection.

And

SEE. VII.

Gal. 5.24.

Gal 5.24.

Eph. 1.6.

And Christ he looks upon us, as he meanes to perfect the worke of Grace in us by little and little, as he meanes to purge and cleanse us, as Epbel 5.26,27. The end of Redemption is, that he might purge his Church, and so never leave it till he have made it a glorious Spoufe in Heaven. Helpoks upon us, as we shall be ere long, and therefore we are faid to be dead to finne, while we are but dying to it. And (faith he) you have crucified the flest, with the affections and lusts thereof, when we are but crucifying it; but it is faid to, because it is as fure to be done, as if it were done already, Asa man, when he is condemned, and going to his execution, he is a dead man: So there is a sentence passed upon finne and corruption, it shall be abolished and die. Therefore it is dead in sentence, and is dying in execution. It is done, They that are in Christ have crucified the flesh, with the lufts thereof. It is as fure to faith as if it were done already. So we are faid to fit in heavenly places with Christ, we are with him already : For Christ having take us so near in affection to himselfe, he will never leavens till he have made us fuch as he may have full contentment in, which is in Heaven, when the contract between him and us shall be fulfilled in confummation of the marriage. Thus faith lookes, and Christ lookes thus upon us : Which should comfort us in weakaese, that God regards us not in our present imperfections, but as the means to make us ere long. In the meane time that he may looke upon us in love, he looks upon us in the obedience of his fon.

fon, in whom whatfoever is good shall be per- SER. VI fected at the laft.

What should we doe then, if Christ doth make his Church thus, his Love, his Dove, bis Yndefiled. by making his love to meet in it as the Centre thereof, whereunto he doth confine all his love (as it were) we should confine our love to him againe, and have no love out of Christ, fince he hath no love out of us : There should be an everlafting mutuall shining, and resection betweene him and the foule. We should lay open our foules to his love (as indeed he defires especially the communion of our affections) we should reflect love to him againe. This perpetuall everlafting entercourse between Christ and his Spouse, is her maine happinesse here, and her eternall happinesse in Heaven; In looking on him, who hath done so much for us, he shines on us, and we looke backe againe upon him. Doth Christ love us fointimately, and fo invincibly, that no indignities nor finne could overcome his love; which made, that he endured that which he hares most, to become sinne for winay the want of that, which was more to him then all the world, the want of the sense of the favour of God for a time, My

God, my God, why hast thou for saken me? Hath Christ thus infinitely loved us, and shall not we backe again make him our love ? In their degree the Saints of God have all done fo. It was a good speech of Ignatius the Martyr, My Love Christ was crucified. So a Christian thould fay, My love was crucified, my love dyed, my love is in

Viet.

1 Cor. 5.21.

heaven:

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Phil. 3.20.

Col. 3.1.

beaven: And for the things on earth I love them, as they have a beame of him in them, as they lead me to him; but he is my love, there my love is pitched, even upon him, this is the ground of these Scripture phrases, But our conversation is in heaven, from whence we looke for the Saviour, the Lord Iefus Christ, &c. and fet your affections on the things that are above. Why ? Christ our love is there, the foule is more where it loves, then where its residence is. It dies (as it were) to other things, and lives in the things it loves; therefore our thoughts and affections, our joy and delight should be drawn up to Christ; for indeed his love hath fuch a magneticall attractive force, that where it is, it will draw up the heavy yron, the groffe foule, and make it heavenly; for there is a binding, a drawing force in this excellent affection of love.

My Love, my Dove, &c.

U/c 2.

There are all words of sweetnesse, he labours to expresse all the affection he can, for the confcience is subject to upbraid, and to clamour much, so that there must be a great deale of perswasion, to still the accusing conscience of a sinner, to set it down, make it quiet, and perswade it of Gods love. Therefore he useth all heavenly Rhetoricke to perswade and move the affections.

Use 3.

In this that the Church is undefiled in Christ, Let us learne when afflicted in conscience, not so much to judge of our selves by what we seele in our selves, as by what faith suggests. In Christ there-

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1 Cor. 5.20.

loh, 4.10,

therefore letus judge of our felves by what we areas in him. We are poore in our felves, but have riches in him; we die in our selves in regard of this life, but we have a life in him, an eternall life; and we are finners in our felves; but we have a Righteou (neße in him, whereby we are righteous in his fight. We are foolish, unskilfull, and ignorant in our selves; but he is our wifedome in all whatfoever is amisse in us. Let us labour to see a full supply of our wants made up in Christ, this is to glorific God as much as if we could fulfill the Law perfectly. If we were as undefiled as Adam was, we could not glorifie God more, then when we find our felves, and our confcience guilty of finnes, yet thus by the Spirit of God to goe out of our felves, and to fee our felves in Christ; and thus to cast our selves on him, embrace him, and take that gift of God given us, Christ offered to us, because God so commands, we honour God more, then if we had the obedience that Adam had at first before his fall: For now in the covenant of Grace, he will be glorified in his mercy, in his forgiving, forbearing, rich transcendent mercy; and in going beyond all our unworthinesse and sinnes, by shewing that there is a Righteousnesse provided for us, the Righteousnesse of God-man, whose obedience and satisfaction is more then our disobedience, because it is the disobedience of man onely; but his obedience and Righteousnesse is the Obedience, and Righteousnesse of God-man : fo it sarisfieth divine justice; and therfore ought to fatisfie Conscience to the full,

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our faith must answer Christs carriage to us; we must therefore account our selves in him undesiled, because he accounts us so, nor in our selves. but as we have a being in him, we are undefiled.

Againe, see here Christ accounts us (even in regard of habituall grace) undefiled, though we have for the prefent many corruptions. Let us therefore learne a leffon of moderation of fo excellent a teacherslet us not be ashamed to learne of our Saviour. What Spirit shall we think they have that will unchurch Churches because they have some defilement and unbrotherly brethren, accounting them no Churches, no Brethren, because they have some imperfections. Why hath not Christ a quarrell to the Church then? is he blindedoth his love make him blind? No. he feeth corruption, but he feeth better things, fomwhat of his owne that makes him overlooke those imperfections, because they are such as he meanes to mortifie, subdue, weare away, and to fire out by the power of his Spirit, which as fire shall waste all those corruptions in time. So it is with the Church; put the cafe, the hath fome corruptions, that it be not with her, as it should be, yet shee is a Church notwithstanding. The Church of Corinth (we fee) Paul Stiles them Saints and Brethren, with all those sweet names, notwithstanding they had many corruptions among them.

I Cer.I.

Wee have a company of malignant spirits worle then thelea great deale, Atheisticall per-

Uses.

fonsthat have no Religion at all, who out of ma- SER. VII. lice and envy watch for the halting of good Christians, who can see nothing but defilement in those that have any good in them, nothing but hypocrisie, mopishnesse, all that is naught, who if they can devise any blemish, put it upon them; whereas Christ fees a great deale of ill in the Church, but he fees it to pardon, subdue, and to pitty the Church for it, extolling and magnifying its goodnesse. What spirits are those of, that watch to fee imperfections in others, that their hearts tell them are better then they, that they may only difgrace them by it; for goodnes. they will fee none.

And likewife, it should teach us norto wrong our felves with false judgement. We should have a double eye, one eye to feethat which is amiffe inus, our owne imperfections, thereby to carry our felves in a perpetuall humility; but an other eye of Faith, to see what we have in Christ, our perfection in him, fo to account of our felves, and glory in this our best being, that in him we have a glorious being, fuch an one whereby God esteemes us perfect, and undefiled in him onely. The one of which fights should inforce us to the other, which is one end, why God in this world leaves corruption in his children. Oh! fince I am thus undefiled, shall I rest in my selfe ! Isthere any harbour for me to rest in mine owne Righteousnesse! O no, it drives a man out of all hatbour ; Nay, I will rest in that Righteousnesses, which God hath wrought by Christ, who is God-

UG 6.

San. VII. God-Man, That will endure the fight of God, being cloathed, with which I can endure the prefence of God: So this fight of our owne unworthinesse and wants, should not be a ground of discouragement, but a ground to drive us perfeetly out of our felves, that by faith we might renew our title to that Righteousnesse, wherein is our especiall glory. Why should we not judge of our felves as Christ doth ? Can we fee more in our felves then hee doth ? yet notwithflanding all he fees, hee accounts us as Vndefiled.

W/e7.

Againe, fince he accounts us undefiled, because he meanes to make us fo, and now lookes on us, as we shall be ; In all our foyles and infirmities, let us comfort our selves, it shall not thus be alwaves with us. O!this A: (h of mine shall fall and fall still, and shall decay as Sauls house, and the Spirit at the last shill conquer in all this. I am not chosen to this beginning, to this conflicting course of life. I am chosen to triumph, to perfeaion of Grace, this is my comfort. Thus we should comfort our selves, and set upon our enemies, and conflict in this hope of victory, I shall ger the better of my felf at the last. Imperfection should not discourage, but comfort us in this world; we are chosen to perfection; Let us still rejoyce, in that we are chosen to Sanctification, which is a little begun, being an earnest of other bleffings; let us not reft in the pledge or in the earnest, but labour for a further pledge of more ftrength and grace: For those that have the Spi-

tit of Christ, will strive to be as much unspotted, San. VII. and as heavenly as they can; To fir themselves for that heavenly Condition as much as may be, when, because they cannot be in heaven, verthey will converfe there as much as they can; and because they cannot be with such company altogether, they will be as much as may be, labouring as they are able to be that which they shall be hereafter. Imperfection contents them not and therefore they pray fill in the Lords Prayer. Thy Kingdome come. While there is any imperfection, their hearts are enlarged more and more, nothing contents them but perfection. And indeed God accounts us thus unsported for this end because he would encourage us. Where he fees the will and endeavour, he gives the title of the thing defired.

Van.3. I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on?
I have washed my feet, how shall I defile

Here is an ingenious confession made by the Church of her own untowardnesse, notwithstanding all Christs heavenly Rhetoricke and personal contract he did use; yet she drawes backe, and seemes to have reason so to doe! I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on against to let thee in, I have mashed my feet, e.c. It is a phrase taken from the custome of those hot countries, wherein they used to wash their seet. I have mashed my feet, now shall I desile them to rise and open the doore to thee? There is a spiritual meaning herein, as if she had said, I have some ease by this

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Objerv. I.

fleeny profession, some freedome from evill tongues, and fome exemption, and immunity from fome troubles I was in before. I was then perhaps too indifcreet, now wilt thou call me againe to thole troubles that I have wifely avoided ! No I have put off my coat, bow half I put is on? I have washed my feet how shall I defile them? Laffect this effare very well . I am content to be as I am without further troubling of my felfe; Thus the Church puts off Christ. This I take to be the meaning of the words. That which is obfervable is this. That it is not an easie matter to bring the foule and Chief together into neare fellowship. Wee fee here how the Church drawes backe a for the fielh moves either notto veeld at all to duty, or to be cold, uncertaine, and unfetled therein. The flesh knowes that a neare communion with Christ cannot stand with fayouring any corruption, and therefore the flesh will doe fomething, but not enough it will veeld to fomething, but not to that that it should doc. to that communion and fellowship that wee ought to have with Christ. To instance in some particulars, as a rule and measure to fomewhat of which we should be.

A Christian life ficulable nothing but a commutation and entercourse with Christ. A walling in the Spirit, and to be spiritually and to sawour the chings of the Spirit altogether, he should study to adoene his protession by a lively and cheerful performance of day, and be exemplary to others and should be in such a frame.

Mat 5.16.

as he should malke continually in the comforts of the Sun. VII. Holy-Ghost undismayed, and undaunted, And Act 9.39. abound in the fruits of the Spirit, and doe all the good he can wherefoever he comes ; He should keep bimfelfe un fotted of the morld, goe againft the Iam. 1.27. freame, and be continually in fuch a temper, as it should be the joy of his heart to be diffolved. and to be with Christ. One might goe on thus in a world of particulars, which would be roo lone. If we could attaine to this excellency, it were an happy life, a Heaven upon Earth, this weshould ayme at. Will the flesh endure this, thinke you? No, it will not; Which you shall see more particularly in this next Observation, which is,

That one way, whereby the unregenerate part in us hinders this communion with Chrift, and the fhining of a beleever in a Christian course. Is by falle presences, reasons and excuses. I have washed

my feet, I have put off my coat, &c.

The flesh never wants excuses and pretences (there was never yet any came to hell, but they had some seeming pretence for their comming thicher) to thit and fuffeoff duties ; there was never yet any eareleffe finfull course, but it had the flesh to justifie it with one reason or other, and therefore it is good to understand the Sophisticall shifts of the slesh, and pretences and shewes which ir hath; and as it is good to know the truth of God, and of Christ revealed in his Word, fo is it to know the falleneffe and deceitfulneffe of our owne hearts, they are both mysteries almost alike hard to be knowne. Labour we then more

2 Tim.4.8.

Bid O 04/mo. 2.

and

lecares

SER. VII.

and more to know the fallbood of our owne disposition, and to know the truth of God: To give instance in a sew particulars: You see in the Church the difficulty of her communion with Christ comes from the idle pretences and excuses she hath. Every one hath his severall pretexts, as his state and condition is. We think we should be loosers, if we give our selves to that degree of goodnesse which others doe, whereas God doth curse those blessings which men get with neglect of duty to him. If we seek first the kingdome of Heaven, all other things that are good for us shall be cast upon us.

Obiett.

Thou shalt lose the favour of such an one?

Never care for that favour thou canst not keep with Gods favour, the favour of man is a smare, take heed of that favour that snares thee: thou losest their favour and company; but thou gainest the favour of Christ, and company of Angels.

Obiett.

But they will raile on thee, and reproach thee with thy old fins?

Anfw.

Care not, God will doe thee good for that, as David faid, when Shemei curfed him.

Obiett.

But I shall lofe my pleasure ?

O but such pleasures end in death; they are but pleasures of sin for a season, & thou shaltnot lose by the change, the wayes of misedome are pleasant wayes, one day religiously spent in keeping of a good conscience, what a sweet farwell hath it? Ioy is insthehabitation of the righteome. It becomes the Righteom to be joyfall. How ever outwardly it seemes,

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Mat. 11 6.

Mat. 5.10,

Objett.

S & 193 7 3

Anjw.

Phil. 3. 10.

scemes, yet there is a Paradise within. Many such objections the sless makes, sometake scandall at the prosperity of the wicked, and affliction of the Saints, and from hence take occasion to rot in their dregs of sin; but what saith Christ, Happy is the man who is not offended in me. As for the prosperity of the wicked, envy them not, they stand in slippery places, and slourish like a greene baytree, but presently they vanish. Take no offence at them nor at the crosse, looke not at this, but at the ensuing comfort. Blessed are they that suffer for Righteousnesse sake, bind such words to your head as your crowne, God reserves the best comforts to the worst times, his people never find it otherwise.

I but if I be thus precise, the times are so bad, I shall be alone.

Complaine not of the times when thou makest them worse, thou shouldest make the times better, the worse the times are, the better be thou, for this is thy glory, to be good in an evill generation. This was Loss glory. Paul tels what ill times they were: But saith he, our conversation is in Heaven, from whence we looke for a Saviour. What brings destruction on Gods people, but their joyning with the wicked. When they joyned with the children of men, then came the floud: These and the like pretences keep men altogether from goodnesse, or else from such a measure, as may bring honour to God, and comfort to themselves.

Or if men be great, why this is not honoura-

ble

SER. VII.

ble to doe thus, as you know what Michall faid to David, How glorious was the King of I fraell this day? like a foole, &cc. To attend upon the word of God with reverence, to make confcience of Religion, O it stands not with greatnesse, &c. But the Spirit of God answereth this in him, I will yet be more vile for God. It is a mans honour here to fland for God, and for good things; and it is our honour, that God will honour us fo much.

The excuses of worldlings. Tim,4.8,

Luk. 10.42.

P[al. 1, 2.

Deut. 17.18, 19.

Those likewise that are worldly have excuses alfo; Alas I must tend my Calling, and they have Scripture for it to. He that provides not for his family is worse then an Infidell, as if God had set up any callings to hinder the calling of Christianity, as if that were not the greatest calling, and the best part that will abide with us for ever, as if it were not the part of a Christian to redeem time from his calling to the duties of Christianity. I have no time (faith the worldling) what will you have me to doe ? Why, what time had David when he meditated on the law of God day and night? he was a King, the King is bound to Rudy the Scriptures : And yet whose employ. ment is greater then the employment of the chiefe Magistrate?

And thus every one as their state and condition is, they have feverall pretences and excuses. Those that are young, their excuse is, we have time enough forthefe things hereafter. Others, as those that were negligent to build the second Temple, The time is not yet fay they; when as the

Hag. 1.2.

Trovations

uncertainty of this life of ours, the weightineffe San. VII. of the bufineffe, the danger of the culturne of fin, the ingaging of our hearts deeper and deeper into the world, makes it a more difficult thing to be a Christian. It more and more darkens our understanding the more we sinne, and the more it estrangeth our affections from good things, the more we have run out in an evill courfe. Time is a special mercy, but when thou hase not timeonly but the meanes, good company, and good motions, thou mayeft never have fuch a gale againe, thy heart may be hardened through the deceirfulnesse of finne. Againe, who would want the comforts of Religion for the prefent (as Auftin faith) I have wanted thy freetneffe too long. What folly is it to wantehe sweetnesse and comfort of Religion to long as wee may have it.

Some others pretend, The uncomfortablenesse of Religion, I shall want my comforts, when as indeed there is no found comfort without having our hearts in a perfect communion with Christ. walking with God, and breaking off from our evill courses. What is the reason of discomforts, unresolvednesse, and unsetlednesse when we know not where we are, whether we goe, or what our condition is, unfetlednesse breeds discomfort, and indeed there is no pleafure fo much, as the pleasure that the serving of God hath with it. As the fire bath light and heate alwayes in it, fo there is no holy action that wee performe throughly, but as it bath an increase of strength,

SELVII

to there is an increase of comfort and joy annexced to in White is a present reward annexed to all things that are spiritually good othey carry with them present peace and joy, the conscience hath that present comfort, which consumes all discouragements whatsoever, as is alwayes found in the experience of that soule, that hath won so much of it selfe, as to breake through discouragements to the practice of holy duties. Bebeevers have a joy and comfort, that others know not as, an hidden kind of wayma, and contentments to the broad and yary many and contentments to the broad and yary many and contentments to the broad and yary many and content-

Rev. 2.7.

Prov. 26.12.

Prov. 16. 16.

blitthe fer and a thouland fuch like difeogragements mon framesor hemselveso My health will nor ferve, I fhall endanger my life. There is a Lion in the may faith the fluggard) who with his excufor thinks hamfelfe wifer then the wifest in the City.
There is none so wise as the sluggard; for belly policy reaches bim a great many excuses, which he shinks will goe for wifedome, because by them he thinks to fleep in a whole skin in He is but a flugger deforation of and though he plead, one alteriologic process, motorely annivered, but spirituall poversy, and barrennelle of foule will come upon him preservined man, and leave him do attiture of grace and comfort, when he shall fee archiclast what an evill course of distribut hath dedy that he hath yeelded so such to his lazie slesh to be drawner away by discouragements from duties; that howas convinced were agree able to the word. I New John may be the grounds and cases of shall state where we are such that the property and shall say that the property and th

Canfes of am

rally fo far as we are not guided by a borter S ricthen our owne; we are inclined to much to the earthly present things of this life; because they are present and pleasant; and we are nuzle up in them and what foever puls us from them is

things.

Againe, joyne with this, that naturally fines the fall, the foule of man having jost wiledome to guide it to that which is cruly good, bath wit enough left to devise untoward shifts, to excuse that which is evill. In this fallenest ate the former abilities to devile things throughly good, is turned to a matter of untoward wir joyned with thifting, God made man right, but he hath fought out many inventions. Carnal wis ferves carnall will very well, and carnal lufts never wans an advocate to plead for them, namely carpall reafor. From the bent therefore of the foule to ill things, Pleasure, Ease, and Honour (such a condition as pleaseth the outward man fines the fall) she bent and weight of the soule goeth this way, together with wir : having loft the Image of God in holy wifedome, there is thifting. This is a ground also why delayes are joyned with

turally abou

Againe, there is another ground, that Compe Nature (inthis like the Devill and fin) which neverappeare in their owne colours, fets a man on this way. Who would not hate the Devillait he the De

Eccl. 7.3.9.

S.A.VII

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hould appeare in his owne likenesses or since if it should appeare in its owne colours; and therefore wit streetheth it selfe to finde out shifts. For sayes the heart, unless there be some shifts and pretenous to cover my shame, I shall be knowne to be what I am indeed, which I would be loth were done: I would have the sweet; but not the shame of since, the credit of Religion, but not put my selfe to the cost which comments with true Religion, to deny my selfe. Compare courses wever appeare in their varies colours, they are like the Devill for this.

Because of o

D. Lean call

the Berief

And then againe, Naturally there is a great deale of hypocrific in us; we may doe duties to facisfic Confeience for fomewhat must be done) to heare now and then, read and come to prayer betwirt fleeping and waking (yawning prayers) when we can doe nothing elfe; formwhat must be done, confeience elle will any our of uschat we are Atheists, and shall be dammed some such withtending flerein is our hypocrific, that we cannot bring our hearts to doe it, as it should be done to purpose for shough it bermie that there is much imperfection in the best actions, the best performances; yet this is hypocrific, when men doe not doe it as God may accept it, and as it may yeeld themselves comfort. The heart drawes backe, duries it will and must doe, but yet will not doe them as it shall have comfort by them. This is inbred in the heart neurally,

Saz.VII

Security of a falls constituted of the constituted

the Ach and corruption pale back disposition of allimen, elleber in Gory of the inowne Acheisticall be And then againe, Another ground may be this, a falle conceit of God, and of Christ, that they will take any thing at our hunds, because we love our felves, and thinket has wealer very well a we thinke that God is fuch a one as we are as it is Pfd. 50:11. Then shoughteft that I was like unto thee, &ce. that God will be put off with any thing, and any excuse will serve the turne. You have not a five are; a fileby careleffe perfon, But bethinks God is mercifull, and Christ died for finners, and I mar provoked suit, see thill he thinks to have formers rule for it, and the mining will fland good with God. This Athere is in usnaturally and when we are palpably to blame in the judgement of others, and purfelves in our lober with a yet weetpit more ignorance and carelefteeffe on God themon our lelves. Twfh, God gardstratt, it is the times, I would be better : It is company whom I must would unto, sec. They thinke God will accept these things from

But out maine ground thereof is. The fean-dals that we meet withall in the world, which (indeed) is a ground, because our owne false hearts are willing to each at any thing. You see (say they) these men that make profession of Religion what they are (and then the Devil will thrust some Hypocrisis into the profession of

The features with all in the ,

Sou. VII.

Beliaten) and they indee all by one ortwo and will be fare to doe it) therein stands their ingena-ity; land if they can see any informity in them that are incomparably better then themselves, Oh they are safe, here is warrant chough to diffike Religion and all good courles, because forme doe fo and for as if the courfe of Religion were the world for that. Thus they wrap them-felves in those excuses, as men doe their hands to defend them from pricks: This is the vile poylon of our hearts that will be naught, and yer notwithflanding will have reason to be so. The speech is, wickednesse never wanted presents : which as it is true of great wickednesse, much more is it of that which goes in the world for through laboration profession, under which many finkers half before they are aware. They never want reason and precent to cover their sinne. there is a mint and forge of them in the fouler it can come them fuddenly. Thus wee fee blocks in our owne way to hinder us from Heaven; we are dunces and dull to doe any thing that is spiritually good, whereof we are incapable. But if it be to lay blocks in our owne way to Heaven; to quarrell with God and his Ordinances, with the doctrine of falvation, with the instruments teachers, and those that lead us a better way; that our wit will serve for. But to take a course to doe in good another day, to lay up comforts, in which we might end and close up our dayes, there we are back

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backward, and have thift upon thift. This is SAN added for the further explication of it, because of the necessity of the point : For, except our hearts be discovered to us, we shall never know what Religion meanes, fave to know fo much as may through the winding, turning, shifting, and falshood of our owne Nature, bring us to hell: Wherein we are worfe enemies to our selves then the Devill is, who could not hurt us, unlesse we did berray our selves. Bue lice hath factors in us to deale for him, our owne carnall wit and affection, they hold correspondencie with him, whence all the mifebiefe that he doth us, is by that intercourse that our nature hath with Satan : That is the Dalilah which betrayeth all the Sampsons (found worthy Chriftians in the world) to their spirituall enemies. Therefore, we can never be sufficiently instructed, what avile nature we have so opposite to Religion, as far as it is faving. Corrupt nature doth not oppose it so far as it is slubbored over, but fo far as may bring us to that flate we should be in, we have no worke enemies then our owne hearts. Therefore let us watch over our selves continually, and use all blessed means appointed of God, whereby we may escape out of this dangerous fleepy disposition of soule) which coff the Church to deare, as we shall bears (God willing)hereafter. to vanity. Take decel of counciling with the

BHT lond : 101 it in the Mercia and it reversioner round about visit one paids about their contin

The eighth Sermon.

CAND. V. HR.

I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on P I have mashed my feet show shall I defile them?

E are now by Gods affiftance to speake of the remedies against the Vazie diffempers we are prone unto in fpiritual things, where we lefroff the laft day

What course flould we take then to come forth from this dillempered latterle, that we may active a spiritually all and religious exercites, or delay and purchase to to the religious exercites, or delay and purchase off with excities.

Pick of all Definence West at the The Party of the P southered Christ, excellence in the land of the land o from God, and drawing in un-tic heed of counciling with fell of if men were in a City environe.

with them what they flouid doe for defence San.VIII
of the City i were it not a mad parte and is it not
a greater madnetic when Christians will cona greater madnelle when Christians will confule with fieth and bloud what they should doe in duties of obcdience, which will alwayes pur us upon tearmes of eafe, the favour of men,contene and the like, which if a man yeeld to, he fall never ener imo heaven. Take heed therefore of confulting with our enemy, Jeeing Saran hath all the correspondency he hath by that ene-my which we harbour mour bosome. In which cafe the hurt he dother by his fophistry comes by our felves, we berray our felves by our carnall scalon, whereby Satan mingleth himfelfe with our imaginations and conceits. Let us therefore beware we liftennot to the council of fieth and bloud, especially when the matter comes to furfering once ; for there of all other things field and bloud doth draw backe. Every one hatha Provin himfelfe, that faith, sparethy faft: Thou art indifference venture that felfe upon this and that hazard. But where the judgement is convinand of the goodnelfe of the cause, whether it be Religion or Institut, for the first or for the second sable that matters not : If the judgement be convinced of the thing, then confut nor with field and bloud what foever the fuffering be. It is not necessary that we should live in riches, honours, pleasures and estimation with the world. But it is necessary was should live honess men and good Christians, therefore when slesh and blond objected in this kind, consist not wish it. First, P. Because

1 Cor.15.50.

San VIII Because it is an enemy, and therefore is to be fulneded and neglected : Secondly, Because it is (aid, Fleft and bload fhall not inherit the kinedome of Harven; and therefore we should practife that first leffon in Religion, Heavenly wisedome; To ayde us wherein, Christ (knowing what an enemy we are to our felves in the wayes of God) faith, Let a man dany himfelfe, and take up bis Groffe and follow me. There is no following of Chuft, confidering that our flesh is so full of cavils and excules, unleffe we practife that heavenly leffon of Christs deny our selves, our whole selfe, our wit and reales in the matters of God of our will and affections. Say nay to all the fluggishnesse of the flesh; filence all presently as soone as ever they discourage thee from holy waves. Consider whence they comes which is enough ifrom Gods and our enemy; and the worst enemy we have that lyeth in our owne bosome. And to inable us the better, marke what Paul faith, We are no more debins to the flesh, &co. We owe nothing to it; I owe not such obedience, such subjection to the flesh and carnali reason; I have renounced it long finces What am Lobnonious to a man unto whom I owe no fervice: We owe the seld to that which wer have long fince renounced:

Rom. 8.

Tobs relolute in Spirituall ut dertakings.

And withall, In Spiritual cour les, let a ferver with refolution: First conclude, it in for most file our judgements by convigated a fact Refolution is a disposition arising from the will immediate its and in the contraction of the contraction o

ately; but it is of the will, by found judges at the wind relocation of the goodnesse of the thing, after which the will relocate. Get resolution from southern the conviction, that such things are good, and that they are best for us, and best for us are his time, the seoner the better, that there is an absolute necessary to have them, and that they are everlatingly good: O these considerations will put us on amaine to obtaine the same. It is our duty, and we shall fin against God; against our conscience, against the Spirit of God, and against others that take like liberty by our examples) If we yeeld to our base lusts and suggestions in this kind.

And to belp Resolution the more, let us have before our eyes the examples of Gods worthies. who (like unto Davids worthies , who brake through the Hoaft of the Philistims for water) have in all ages broken through all discouragements, and made conscience more to please God, to hold communion and fellowship with Christ, then to hold any correspondency with the world. Looketo bleffed Paul What done vexing of me and breaking my beart? I am ready not onely to goe to lerufalem, but to die for Christs fake. And looke to Christ, how he shakes off Perer. Get thee behind me Satun, &cc. Looke to Males, how hee shooke off all the folicitations of a Conre Besaufe he bad an eye to the recompence of the reward. Looke to Joshnah, I and my bouse with ferve the Land. Let others of the world-doe what they will : If others will goe to the Devil let them,

A bels to Refolution. 2 Sam. 22.16

Adasta.

Mat. 16, 23, Heb. 11, 16,

Ioth 24.15

San.VIII

Nels 6.11.

them, for my felie, landmy house (thosethat I have charge of) will serve the Lord. This was a noble reliabition which was in good Nelmind, shall such a mark I syet what shall I sie! shall Labe this! yeeld to this base discouragement! shall I discourage others (like those sies of Canama) by mine example! Hence it is that Heb. 11. In that notable Chapter, The little base of Markey, after the catalogue of those worthies set downe there, that which we are exhorted and pointed to in the beginning of the next Chapter, is unto the practise of the like vertues in imication, having before us such a cloud of witnesses, wherewith being compassed, the exhortation is, Let us therefore shake of every thing that present down, and the since that banges so fait on, &cc. As the Cloud was a guide to them to Canami out of Egypt: so the Cloud of good examples is as it were a light to goe before us, to the beaventy Canada.

Heb 1 1.2.

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Heb. ca. 1.

In this case above all, let us looke to Christ. We is the Author and finisher of our faith. This will make us breake through discouragements, and resolve indeed. What could hinder him to come from Heaven to the Womb of the Virgin, from thence to the Crosse, and so at the Grave, to be abased lower then ever any creature was. His love to us so carried him through all discouragements and disgraces. Consider him, who consider strong spains of such a consideration of Christs love and example well

Hebra.

carry us through all discouragements whatfor San VII

And further, Let me be able by found reasons to justifie the worm of God, and to ensure equils, to grounds and give account of what we doe to our selves and others, with reasons why we functifie the Sabbath, have for all we see. fuch Communion with God in Prayer, neglect the fathions of the world, &c. To have reafons ready from Scripture, is an excellent thing, when we are able to justifie whatfacver we doe by the Word, against all the quarrels of our owne hearts and others. When we are led to do things onely by the example of others, or ble respects, then we are oft times purto it on the fudden by temprations, being not able to Justifie what we doe. Let us labour therefore to doe things upon good grounds, and beable to justific all the wayes of Religion, as they are casily justi-fied, for nothing in this world stands with so much reafon, as exacinefic in the wayes of God There is so much reason for nothing in the world, as to be not oricly Christians, but exact Christians, as Paul faith to Agripps, wouldto God you were not drugt, but altogether as I me, fawing theft bonds. To make confcience of all wayes and courses, it stands with the most reason of the world, so to justifie Religion by reasons unanswerable, that may fet downe corrupt nature, and frop the mouth of the Devill himfelfe: And become let us propound found and from questions to our selves often a sac those thing (that I am moved to doe) good for me they not Cannon

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San VIII.

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If they be good, why doe I not doe them? If they be bad, why doe I doe them at all? If they be good, why doe I flicke at them? how doe I prove them to be good? have alway ready fome Scripture, or teafon from thence which is as good. The reafons of the word are most divincly strong, let them be ready against all Objections what sover; as against sleight oathes, thinke of that of Christ, that we must give an account for all idle words, how much more for Atheisticall oathes: so against grosser sinnes learne reafon; a civill man, an Heathen would not doe

Mat.12.

I.
From the Dignity of our profession.

Confider what excuses may be sufficient at the day of judgement.

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So alfo when the flesh moveth us to any backwardneffein religious courles, let us have some Scripture ready, or reasons deducted from it. As From the Diemity of our Profession from the great Hopes we have to be glorious another day. And reafon the matter. how doth this that I am moved to fair with my Hopes and expectation to come? how furthers it my journey homewards on Aind confider this likewife, That no excluse will form the surne at the day of judgement, but fuch an one as arifesh from an invincible infirming, or an unremeveable impediment; fuch an excuse taken from an invincible infirmity, may then ferve the turne: As when we cannot pollibly does thing from impediments, that all the meanes in the world cannot remove : As a poore man cannot be liberall, &c. Excuses also fercht from impossible inpediments as from invincible weakneffe may availe, if a man have an infirme body, that he cannot rurne; which are not fo much excuses; as a just plea: But otherwise, our untoward excuses will not serve the turne. What hindered them in the

that dolefull mellage, They shall never take of my feast. There is such an infinite disproportion between the good of Religion. Peace of Conscience, so in the Holy-Ghost here, and Heaven and Happinesse hereafter; and between any thing in this world, that to alleadge any hinderance whereby we cannot keep a good conscience, and preserve allurance of salvation, is most

extreame folly and Atheisme. I believe not a better life (the disproportion being so great between the state of this life and a better) if I setch excuses from the things of this life, to keep me from Religion; the Feare of God, and working out my salvanon with seare and trembling. These excuses will not serve the turne, not only

cannot doethat which shother most canon these Sux VIII excuses with a gracious God will serve the

Luk. 14.

Gospell, who were invited to the Supper : Excuses from oxen, Wives, &c. Was it not lawfull to buy Oxen; and was it not lawfull for the married to take content in a Wife; weather had married a Wife; were not all these things lawfull; very lawfull: The Farme hurts not, is it hinders not, nor the Wife, Oxen, nor any thing; but in this case, when we regard these things more than the invitation to come to the seaso of holy things: Here is the malice of the Devill, which brings

totes e ar ferces, is texts the packe of Religion.

The alanget i

with God, at the day of judgement but allo our owne conferences will tell us that we are Hypocrites

Sur. VIII. crites to make fuch or fuch a pleastherfore when men become falfe, thereby to provide for wife or children, and take corrupt couries to keep them from Religion, with present of their callings (least they mould lofe one day in feven) this imployment cannot prosper, which sleights over duties under false presences. O ! they can toile for the pelfe of the world; but for matters of their foules, they turne off all fhamefully, as if there were not a God to judge them, a Heaven to reward them, or a Hell to punish them. Will fuch excules ferve the turne? O no, they cannot with confeience, much leffe with God the Judge, who is greater then our conference. This is another way to eat off thefe idle cavils, to confider that thefe excuses cannot ferve the turne, neither to comfort confcience in this world, nor to uphold us in our please the day of judgement, Remem-

And then againe, Let as inure our felors to beare the yeaks of Religion from our youth, which will make it enfie afterwards. It were an excellent thing, if chose who are young (in the prime of their yeares) would inter themselves to the ex-creise of Religion, this would make it case tunto them, to read the word of God, to open their spirits unto him in Preyer. It may pleafe God hereby (though they be negligent herein) yet they may be called to Religion. But for an old man there is much worker o foe to reade, to get any thing ineo his brames S. Mitchest in Jan 1981 Care of the

That the longe we put off Re ligion, the mo will be our ex cufes.

to stenio f dibres to dille

1 Tim.6.11.

have been prevented by a timely and featonable training up in a course of Religion. Prophage young persons know not what they doe when they put off Religion. Have they excules now, they will have many more bergafter, when Sa tan and corsuption will be much Bronger, O them beare the yoake of Religion, thanis, inur themselves to duties that become Christians. which may facilisate and make it colleand plymandoenos beare, pray and read; becan never have Faith, Grace, Knowledge, Monthestion of comunion (wherein Religion Bands) has becanfe these lead to duries that are hard to nature, and harsh, it is swifedome to inure young ones thereto betimes, that having used themselves to thefe preparing duties, they may be the more fitted for the effentiall ones. That having things in the braine by reading and hearing, Grace may be wrought in the heart, it being a move estibifface from the brains to the hearth Whom a man is converted, it is so calle matter to bring ir from the braine usto the beart, whereas a mar that hath been negligent in his youth, must then beinftructed in the principles of Religion Tha fore it is a miferable cafe (chough men he myen fo politicke it the world) to have been negligent hereintill ago, he becode a great deale of diffi-culty to them exerthey can come to be in fuch a Receive Christian hand bein Remonstant cherefore and accomplishment of the Tarretty of Paris

San. VIII. man, return felianfelien Gedlineft . It is a good thing for all that are young to exercise them-selves to all duries of Religion, or else pretences will grow up with age, whereby they will be indisposed every day more then other. Experience shewes it generally, we may believe it if we will not, we shall find it hereafter too true by woefull experience.

12.0 0 T

And then againe, by little and little, not only to be inured to the youke of Religion, but like-wife to endure difficulties, opposition and hardship, as the Apostle stands upon it to Timothy, To enwe bard bip and offictions from the boginning. If thething be good and warrantable, neglect the speeches of the world. What are the speeches of a company of men in the state of nature, in their miferable condition, to regard them foras not to endure hardship in such things, of the goodnesse whereof we are convinced ? But in thefe dayes men take up a delicate profession of Religion, men will be religious, but they will suffer nothing, not a taunt or a Goffe, they will part with nothing, be at no loffe, fufferno croffe, be at no paines with Religion further then may fland with all earthly content of this world. This detime profession (if anything among to) threate-beth the removing of the Cospell and blessed truths we enjoy, because we will not part with any pleasure now. How will shey suffer affici-ous for the Gospell (if such times come) that will not part with a make and life a toperfluity, this will not part with a route

wifely of the corrupt heart, as to deny and overcome it felfe in things that are groffely ill. How will a man part with his blond and life, that will not part with things that he should part with all, not onely with something to the poore, and to good uses, but to part with some sinful course of life and wicked and ungodly lusts that fight against the soule, who will not endure not so much as acheeke, who rather then they will goe

unlawoury diffeourie, which diffeovereth a rotten Spirit, and injecteth others. Here is a profession of Religion indeed, that cannot have so much

a Contre

inder that confine wherewith the world is pleafed to disgrace Religions, they will live and die
like Athersts. This extreame tendetnesse in the
matters of God and of salvation, is the cause why
many eternally perish the distribution of the cause why
many eternally perish the distribution of the cause why
many eternally perish the cause of the cause of

To remember what we flood all be, and who we floods all SHEVHI.

1 Cor. 15.58.4

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to come, when therefore the heart is that, when any opportunity is offered of doing good, he may conclude certainly, I am cold and dail, pretend what I will, I am not as I should be we Christian ought to abound in the works of the Lord of pecialty having such abundance of encouragements as we have: What a world of encouragements bath a Christianethere are nonetothole of Religion. from the inward content that it brings here at the house of death, and in glory hereofter. When we are drawners be learny, niggardly, and base to things that are good, firely this is not as it this is a fault. A Christian thould are all times be fired yeeld and to render up his foule unto God, because our life is uncertaine. When therefore we are moved by corruption to live in a flate that we cannot abide to die in, because we are under the gulfrof some flangthen certainly prerend what we will, our flate is to farre naughtures farre as there is unfit nelle and unwilling neffeto elle. Berge have in the eye of our foulesherefole, what a Christian month be; at mean in and thinke that when we flower a lower measure and piech; that (pretend what we will) rall is but from carnall wirand policy, the greatest enemy that Re-ligious ath, and Allers of the Kingdome

We pray in the Lords Prayer, Thy Kingdome come; thy will be almotherath as it is in Heaven, great defites, and which thould be the defites of all your heaven. But herein we want the Bypocines, will elt we pray thus, that the Kingdom of

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Ged may came, that Christ may rule in our hearts over lusts and defires; yet not withstanding we pretend this and that excuse, whereby we may be led with this and that lust, we crosse our own prayers; yet is shower hiwhat pitch we should aspire to, Te sandifie the Lord in our hearts, to de-

light in him, and crust in him above all. When

we doe not this, we fall those of our owne pray-

ers. And when we cannot bring our hearts to ful-

fer, and to do what God would have us to do, but are led away with our ownerwils; we are not as we should be conformable to Christs in ell-things; it is our prayer, and there fore we should ayme at it. Now when sessand bloud fers up a pitch of Religion, I am well enough; und yet prayes; Halland be rby Name, Thy Kingdome come, Thy will be done for. Such a stants and y pocrite; for his prayer leads him fur

bleffe our felves, but thinke that we should al-

SHLVIN

To doe of our control of the Cod, care and care cod, care and care cod, care

where is all perfection, until when, our life is a life of endeavour and progresse. Though we be never so perfect, yet Christ may more rule and serup his Kingdome yet more in the treat; and further bring our will to his in all things a when she had bloud setup cavils against this, we play the hypocrites with God and crosse our selves. Therefore let its sustific a measure of Religious beyond our present pitch whatsoever it is, justificity more and more still. Thinks we are never as

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works of Relicalling to God, and not to man.

Againe, Remember so doe ellabings to God; and not to man in our Callings, both of Religion, and in our particular Callings; and then what foever difcouragement there is from men, we should not be discouraged. We shall heare men continually complaine of others, that they are unthankfull persons, and why should we doe any thing for them? Why? doe it to God: If it fall within our callings, let us doe justice and shew mercy, God will accept, though men doe not liceuts off many discouragements in duties : It is best to have Gods reward. In this world it is good to meet with naughty unthankfull persons, because else we should meet with all our reward here. It is good to doe somewhat for Gods sike, and for Religion, let people be as thankfull as they will; to lay, I did it not to you, but to God. If a man regard the discouragement of the world, he shall never doe that which is good, people in the world are so unthankfull and regardlesses those that wish them best, and that doe best to them. But if a man doe athing to God, and doe it out of duty and confeience, he may hold on, have he never fo many discouragement in the mostil, the failioic nothing, all shall be rewarded, and is

To be perfusded that fine the greatest evil, and grace regarded.
the greaten Likewill
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Likewife be fure to carry this in mind, The finne is the greatoft will, and grace and gooding

excule for finne, from any thing in the world for it is the world thing in the world, which fraines the foule, and hinders it from comfort; And for grace and goodnesse in the inward man, it is the best thing in the world, therefore purchasethis, though with difadvantage. It is best to avoid fin, though with enduring evill ; yea to avoid the leaft finne, by enduring the greateft evill. It is wisedome to doe good with disadvantage, when the disadvantage is bounded only in this life, the thing that I do, being a thing which furthers my reckoning at the day of account. Therefore have this alway in confideration, what foever I fuffer in this world, I will not finne, this will cut off a worldof excuses.

Therefore let us labour to cut off all cavils, and to arme our felves. It is the Apolile Peters exhortation, as Davids worthies brake through the pikes to fetch him water from the Wellof Beth-leben: fo all Christian worthies that looke to be crowned, let them be armed inwardly with refolution for good things, take up refolutions that they will doe it. As Paul tels his scholler Time. thy of his purpose, Then knowest my purpose, and manner of living : This is the manner of a Chriftian life ; that this, I will sen breake for all the wirid. So there is a purpose of living homestry, a manner of life, not by starts, now and then to speake a good word, and to doe a good deed. But there is a purpole and manner of life for it he refolves alwayes for the befithings.

1 Pet.4 1.

2 Tim. 3.10.

Pfal 119.

And

San. VIII. man, to exercife himfelfe in Godlineffe : It is a good thing for all that are young to exercise themselves to all duties of Religion, or else pretences will grow up with age, whereby they will be indisposed every day more then other. Experience shewes it generally, we may beleeve it if we will not, we shall find it hereafter too true by woefull experience.

felves to diffculty and bard-3 Tim, 2, 3.

And then againe, by little and little, not only to be inured to the yoake of Religion, but likewife to endure difficulties, opposition and hardsbup; as the Apostle stands upon it to Timothy, To endure hardship and afflictions from the beginning. If thething be good and warrantable, neglect the speeches of the world. What are the speeches of. a company of men in the state of nature, in their miserable condition, to regard them so as not to endure hardship in such things, of the goodnesse whereof we are convinced ? But in these dayes men take up a delicate profession of Religion, men will be religious, but they will fuffer nothing, nor a taunt or a scoffe, they will part with nothing, be at no loffe, fuffer no croffe, be at no paines with Religion further then may stand with all earthly content of this world. This delicate profession (if any thing among us) threatebeth the removing of the Gospell and bleffed truths we enjoy, because we will not part with any pleasure now. How will they suffer afflictions for the Gospell(if such times come) that will not part with a vaine eath; a corrupt fashion of life, a fuperfluity, that will not part with a rotten

unfavoury difcourfe, which difcovereth a rotten San. VIII. Spirit, and infect th others. Here is a profession of Religion indeed, that cannot have fo much mastery of the corrupt heart, as to deny and overcome it felte at things that are groffe will. How will a man part with his blond and life, that will not part with things that he should part withall, not onely with fomething to the poore, and to good uses, but to part with some finfull course of life and wicked and ungodly lufts that fight against the soule, who will not endure not so much as a checke, who rather then they will goe under that censure wherewith the world is pleafed to diffrace Religion, they will live and die like Atheifts. This extreame tendernesse in the matters of God and of salvation, is the cause why

Againe, to cut off all vaine excuses, Let us of have in thought of our heart what we should be, and what we should all aime at, and how far we come all short of it. A Christian that hopes of good of his Religion, should live by faith, and depend upon God in the use of lawfull meanes. If he be as he should be, he ought to walke with God, keep his watch with him, and dee nothing unbeseming the eye of God. When his corruption drawes him to be carelesse, then he is not as he should be; for in a right temper he ought to be sitted to every good worke, ready for all opportunities of doing any thing that is good; because the time of this life is the seeds-time, the time of doing good, the time of reaping is in the world

many eternally perifh.

To remember what we flouted all be, and what we flouted all aims at.

San. VIII. to come; when therefore the heart is thut, when any opportunity is offered of doing good he may conclude certainly, I am cold and dull, pretend what I will. I am not as I should be. A Christian ought to abound in the worke of the Lord, especially having fuch abundance of encouragements as we have. What a world of encouragements hath a Christian there are none to those of Religion, from the inward content that it brings here at the houre of death, and in glory hereafter. When we are drawne to be scanty, niggardly, and base to things that are good, firely this is not as it should be, pretend what we will to the contrary. this is a fault. A Christian should at all times be fir to yeeld and to render up his foule unto God, because our life is uncertaine. When therefore we are moved by corruption to live in a flace that we cannot abide to die in, because we are under the guilt of some sinnerthen certainly prerend what we will, our flate is to farre naughturas farre as there is unfitneffe and unwillingneffe to die. Let us have in the eye of our fouletherefore. what a Christian should be, aime at it, and thinke that when we stop at a lower measure and pitch : that (pretend what we will) all is but from carnall wir and policy, the greatest enemy that Religion hath.

We pray in the Lords Prayer, Thy Kingdome come, thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven, great defires, and which should be the defires of all our hearts. But herein we play the Hypocrites, whileft we pray thus, that the Kingdome of

God

God may come, that Christ may rule in our hearts | SER. VIII over luftsand defires; yet notwithstanding we pretend this and that excuse, whereby we may be led with this and that luft, we croffe our own prayers; yet it sheweth what pitch we should afpire to, To fandifie the Lord in our bearts, to delight in him, and truft in him above all. When we doe not this, we fall short of our owne prayers. And when we cannot bring our hearts to fuffer, and to do what God would have us to do, but are led away with our owne wils, we are not as we should be our wils should be conformable to Christs in all-things; it is our prayer, and therefore we should ayme at it. Now when slesh and bloud fets up a pitch of Religion, I am well enough; and yet prayes, Hallowed be thy Name, Thy Kingdome come, Thy will be done, &c. Such a man is an hypocrite; for his prayer leads him further and further faill till he come to Heaven. where is all perfection, untill when, our life is a life of endeavour and progresse. Though we be never fo perfect, yet Christ may more rule and fer up his Kingdome yet more in the heart, and further bring our will to his in all things : when flefh and bloud fetsup cavils against this, we play the hypocrites with God and croffe our felves. Therefore let us justifie a measure of Religion beyond our present pitch whatsoever it is, justifie it more and more ftill. Thinke we are never as we should be till we be in Heaven, and never bleffe our felves, but thinke that we should alwayes be on the growing hand, and whatfoever excuse

San. VIII. excuse comes to hinder us from zealousnesse and carneftnesse (though it carry a shew of reason in the profession of Religion) account it to come from our corrupt hearts.

To doe all our works of Religion and our calling to God, and not to man.

Againe, Remember to doe all things to God, and not to man in our Callings, both of Religion, and in our particular Callings; and then what foever difcouragement there is from men, we should not be discouraged. We shall heare men continually complaine of others, that they are unthankfull persons, and why should we doe any thing for them! Why! doe it to God: If it fall within our callings, let us doe justice and shew mercy, God will accept, though men doe not: It cuts off many discouragements in duties : It is best to have Gods reward. In this world it is good to meet with naughty unthankfull persons, because else we should meet with all our reward here. It is good to doe somewhat for Gods sake, and for Religion, let people be as thankfull asthey will; to fay, I did it not to you, but to God. If a man regard the discouragement of the world, he shall never doe that which is good, people in the world are so unthankfull and regardlesseto those that wish them best, and that doe best to them. But if a man doe a thing to God, and doe it out of duty and conscience, he may hold on, have he never so many discouragements in the world, he shall lose nothing, all shall be rewarded, and is

To be perfusded that finne is the greatest evill, and grace regarded. the greatest good in the world.

Likewise be fure to carry this in mind, That sinne is the greatest evill, and grace and goodnesse

the best thing in the world. Therefore there is no SER. VIII. excuse for sinne, from any thing in the world for it is the worlt thing in the world, which staines the foule, and hinders it from comfort. And for grace and goodnesse in the inward man, it is the best thing in the world, therefore purchasethis, though with disadvantage. It is best to avoid fin, though with enduring evill; yea to avoid the leaft finne, by enduring the greatest evill. It is wisedome to doe good with disadvantage, when the disadvantage is bounded only in this life, the thing that I do, being a thing which furthers my reckoning at the day of account. Therefore have this alway in confideration, what foever I fuffer in this world, I will not finge, this will cut off a world of excuses.

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1 Pet.4.1.

2 Tim. 3.10.

Pfal 119.

And

Sex.VIII.

Mat. 1 1. 12.

And to this end beg of God his Spirir, which is above all impediments. The more Spirit, the more strength and courage against impediments. The more we attend upon holy meanes, the more spirituall and heavenly light and life is fet up in the fonle. The more spirituall wee are, the more we shall tread under foot all those things that stand between us and Heaven. Let us therefore labour more and more for the Spirit, and then wee shall offer an holy violence unto good things; as it was faid of John Baptiffs time, The Kingdome of God fuffered violence, men were so eager of it, as that they surprized it as a Caffle, by violence. There is no way to take Heaven but by offering violence to difcouragement, corruption, and what foewer stands in the way, The violent onely takes Heaven by farce. Now when we are spirituall, we first not prerend, That there is a Lyon in the way, that there are difficulties, as the fluggard doth, that thinks himselfe wifer then many men who can ren der a reason; but wee shall goe boldly and couragiously on ; and know that there are more encouragements for good, and ftronger, then the world hath allusements to bee naught, which are but for the prefent life; but wee have inward ones, which will hold out in the houre of death and after. Therefore, goe on boldly and resolutely in good things, alwayes remembring to beg the Spirit of God, that may anne our fpirits with invincible courage. Now

Heb. 1 1.27. Cant. 8.6.

Now the Spirit of God brings Faith with SER. VI it, which is a conquering victorious grace over the world, and fees him that is invisible; which brings love also, which is strong as death, wherewith the foule being warmed, It constraineth us to doe duties in spight of all impediments; the Spirit of God will strengthen our hope also of Heaven, which strengthens us a. gainft all discouragements which fland in our way : For this hope is on greater and better grounds then discouragements are; and hee that giveth us this hope, will inable us to poffeffe

Therefore labour first, to have a cleare understanding of the things of God, and of the excellency of them, for light will cause heate. Why did the Kingdome of Heaven in John Baptists time suffer violence? why were men then fo violent to cleave unto Christ ? because from that time the Gospell was more clearly manifested. And heavenly truths the more they are difcovered and layd open (there is such an excellency in them) the more they worke upon the heart and affections. Therefore, The Kingdome of Heaven Suffered violence. And where are people more earnest after good things, then in these places where the Evangelicall Truths of God are layd open most, therethey breake through all discouragements whatfoever.

And fo, Labour for Faith to beleeve those truths, which is the most victorious and conquering

Grace.

Phil.4.13.

Mat.15.

SEE. VIII. Grace, that will carry us through all discouragements whatfoever, because it will set greater things before us, then the discouragements are. Are we afraid of men ? Faith it fets Hell before us. Are we allured by the world ? it fers Heaven before us. It conquers the world with all the discouraging temptations thereof. Are the discouragements from impossibilities? O, It is hard, I cannot doe it. I but (faith Paul) I am able to doe all things through Christ that streng. thens me. There is a kinde of omnipotency in faith, o woman beit unto thee as theu wilt. We have abundance of strength in Christ, Faith is but an empty hand that goes to Christ to draw from him what it hath need of ; In Christ I can doe all things.

2 Cor.5.14.

Cant. 8.

So. To have our hearts warmed wish love to him; this Grace of the Spitit will make us paffe through all discouragements; for it hath a constraining power; The love of Christ confraines us (faith the Apostle) If our hearts once be warmed with the love of Christ, this will make us to thinke nothing too deare for Christ, and will cut off all excuses and pretences whatfoever, which come from coldnesse of affection. Love is frong as death, as we have it in this Booke, Much water cannot quench it. All oppositions and discouragements whatsoever, all the water which the Devill and the world hath or useth, cannot quench the heavenly fire of love, when it is kindled in any measure. What carried the bleffed Saints and Martyrs of God

SER.VIII

in all times through the pikes of all discouragements? The Spirit of God, by the Spirit of love, from a Spirit of Faith, and heavenly conviction of the excellency and truth of the things: they saw such a light which wrought upon their affections, and carried them amaine against the streame (contrary to the streame of the times wherein they lived) that the worse the times were, the better they were.

And let us confider againe, That Christ will not be alwayes thus alluring us, that wee shall not alwayes have these encouragements, such truths and motions of Gods Spirit, as perhaps we feele now. Therefore when we feele any good motion stirred up toward Christ, entertaine it presently, haply we shall never heare of it againe, the longer we deferre and put it off, the worse. As a man that is rowing in a boat, let him neglect his stroake, the neglecting of one may make him tug at it sive or fix times after to overtake those that are before him. So nothing is gotten by sloath and negligence, wee doe but cast our selvs backe the more.

And let us helpe our selves with setting the Glory to come before our eyes, with Moses to have a Patriarks eye to him that is invisible, to see a Countrey afarre off. Now, we are nearer salvation, then when we believed, let us help our backward soules this way; that so, having still Glory in our eyes, it may help us to goethrough

The shortnesse of enjoying these betps.

By fetting the glory to come before m-Heb. 11. Ser. VIII

all discouragements whatsoever they be. We know Zaccheus, when he was afraid that hee should not see Christ, went before the multitude, and getting up upon the top of a Tree, thus helps himfelfe: So doth Grace helpe it selfe by Glory. And so farre is Grace from objecting and pretending less, as it makes fupplies in Gods fervice; as David, who in this case was pleased to be accounted vile. Let us looke unto the Recompence of the reward, not to the present discouragements, but to the prize at the end of the race. What makes a fouldier to fight hard for the victory in the end? The sweetnesse of the triumph. What makes a Husbandman goe through all discouragements? he hopes to receive a crop in the end. Confider the iffue which followeth after a conscionable, carefull, and Christian life, after a more neare and perfect walking with God, maintaining Communion with him. Let there be what discouragements there will be in the world, The end thereof is peace, The end of that man is peace. Upon this ground, the Apostle exhorts us, to be fruitfull, and abundant in the worke of the Lord; knowing that your Labour is not in vaine in the Lord.

PGL37.

1 Cor.15.58.

THE

SEE.IX.



The ninth Sermon.

CANT. V. VI.

Irose to open to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himselfe, &cc.



Aturally we are prone to delaies in heavenly things, and then to cover all with excuses. A man is a Sophister to himselfe, whom he first deceives, before the Devill, or the

World deceive him; Which is the reason why so oft in Scripture you have this mentioned. Be not deceived, God is not mocked: Be not deceived, neither Adulterer, nor Coverous person, nor such and such, shall ever enter into the Kingdome of Heaven. Be not deceived. Which is an intimation, that naturally we are very prone to be deceived in points of the greatest consequence in the world, to flatter our selves (as the Church doth here) with false excuses, I have put off my coat, &c. But we shall now see in this next verse, what becomes of all those excuses, and backwardnesse of the Church, whereby shee puts off Christ.

Gal, 6.7

Cordana

San. IX. Ver.4.

Ver.5.

Va.6.

My Beloved put in his hand by the bole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him.

I rose to open to my Beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh upon the handles of the locke.

Irofe to open to my Beloved, but my Beloved had

withdrawne himselfe,&c.

This comes of her fluggishnesse, and drowsinesse, that Christ absenced and withdrew himselfe. There are three things here set downe in these verses now read:

1. Christs withdrawing of himselfe.

2. His gratious dealing having withdrawn him-

felfe.

He doth not altogether leave his Church, but puts his finger into the hole of the doore, and then leaves some sweetnesse behind him before he goes. After which is set downe,

3. The successe of Christs departure, and with-

drawing of himselfe from ber.

1. Her bowels were moved in her, which were hard before.

2. She rose up out of her bed, wherein formerly she had framed, and composed her selfe to rest.

3. She feeks, and cals after him.

But the Doctrinal points, which are to be obferved out of these verses, are these:

1. That Christ doth sometimes use to leave his shildren as he did the Church here.

2. That the cause is from the Church her selfe, as we see how unkindly she had used Christ, to let

Objerv. I.

Objerv.z.

him attend our leifure fo long; therefore heta- Sax.IX. king a holy ftate upon him, leaves the Church. The cause of his forsaking us, is in our selves, we may thanke our felves for it.

2. That though Christ deale thus with us, Observ. 3. ver notwithstanding, he never leaves us wholly, without some foot steps of his faving grace, and everlasting love, some remainders and prints be leaves upon the foule : So as it lingers after him, and never reststill it find him, he alwayes leaves some. thing. There is never a totall defertion; as we fee here in Christs dealing, he puts bis finger into the hole of the doore, he stands at the doore, and leaves myrrb behind him, something in the heart that causeth a lingering, and reftlesse affection in her towards Christ.

4. That the Church by reason of this gracious Observ.4. dealing of Christ (leaving somewhat behind bim) is sensible of her former unkindnesse, is restlesse and firs up her felfe to endeavour more and more, till the have recovered her former communion, and sweet fellow hip with Christ, which she had before. She never gives over till Christ and shee meet againe in peace (as we shall fee in the profecution) These be the chiefe points considerable:

First, Chrift doth ufe fomtimes to leave bis Church, Obferv. T. as here he doth, My Beloved had withdrawne himfelfe.&c.

But what kind of leaving is it ?

Wee must distinguish of Christs leavings, and withdrawings of himselfe: They are either

SER.IX.

in regard of ontward or inward comforts and helps.

1. Outward, as Christ leaves his Church somtimes, by taking away the meanes of Salvation, the Ministery, or by taking away outward comforts, which is a withdrawing of his, especially if he accompany the taking of them away with some signes of his displeasure, or sense of his anger, as usually it fals out. This doth imbitter all crosses and losses, namely when they come from Christ, as a Testimony of his anger for our former unkindnesse.

2. Sometimes his for saking is more inward, and that is double; Either in regard of peace, and joy, sweet inward comfort that the soule had wont to seele in the holy Ordinances by the Spirit of Christ; or in regard of strength and assistance. There is described in regard of Comfort, and in regard of strength. Sometimes he leaves them to themselves in regard of strength and supportation to fall into some sin, to cure some greater sin perhaps.

Now that Christ thus leaves his Church, it is true of all, both of the body and of each particu-

lar member of the Church.

It is true of the whole body of the Church; for you have the Church complaining. If a. 49.

14. God bath forgotten me. Can a Mother forget her childs 2 (Gieb God agains) So Pal a. 4.

Bady.

14. God bath forgotten me. Can a Mother forget her childe? (faith God againe) So Pfal. 44.9. and in other places, the Church complaines of forfakings. The Scripture is full of complaints in

this kind,

It is true of the feverall members, and especially Sua.IX. of the most eminent members, as we see hely Iob complaines, as if God had fet bim (as it were) a but to shoot at, and had opposed himselfe against him. So David complaines (Pfal. 88.11. Pfal. 77. o, and Pfal. 60.1. and in other Pfalmes) of Gods anger. Correct me not in thine anger. The Pfalmes are full of this, fo as it would be time unprofitably spent to be large in a point so cleare, that every one knoweth well enough, who reads and understands the Psalmes. So Ionah likewise felt a kind of for faking, when he was in the midft of the sea, when the waves were without, and terrors within, when he was in the midft of Hell (as it were) Thus you fee the inflances cleare the point.

The ends that God hath in it are many First, To indeare his presence the more to us, which we fleighted too much before. It is our corruption. the not valuing of things till they be gone, we fet not the true price upon them when we enjoy them. When we enjoy good things, we looke at the grievances which are mingled with the good, and forget the good, which when it is gone then wee remember the good. The Ifractites could remember their onyons and garlicke, and forget their flavery : So because Manna was prefent, they despised Manna and that upon one inconvenience it had, It was ordinary with them, Thus the corrupt heart of man is prone in the enjoying of favours: If it have any grievance, it murmures at that, and it troubles and makes

lob 7.1.

Ionah 2,4,5

To in leave for mer Nighted pre fence.

them

SER. IX.

them forget all the goodnesse and sweetnesse of what they enjoy. But on the contrary, when God withdrawes those good things from us, then we forget those former inconveniences, and begin to thinke what good we had by them. This is the poyson and corruption of our Nature.

To try the truth
of our graces
and affections.

Again, Christ seems to forsake us, to try the truth of the graces and affections in us, whether they be true or not, and to cause us to make after him, when he seems to forsake us, as undoubtedly we shall, where there is truth of grace planted in the heart in any measure.

To teach m wifdome how to deale with athers.: 2 Cor. t. 4. And In regard of others, he doth it to teach us heavenly wisdome how to deale with those in as stiction: It makes us wise, tender, and successful in dealing with others, when we have felt the like particular grievance our selves; as Gal. 6.1. Brethren if a man he overtaken in a fault, youthat are spirituall restore such an one in the spirit of meeknesse, considering thy selfe, least thou also be tempted. Experience of spirituall griefe in this kind, will make us fir, able and wise every way to deale with others.

To weave m from the work This ferves likewise, To weane us from the world, in the plenty and abundance of all earthly things: For take a Christian that hath no crosse in the world, let him finde some estrangement of Christ from his spirit, that he finds not the comforts of the Holy-Ghost, and that inlargement which in former times he enjoyed, and all the wealth he hath, the earthly contentments he en-

joyes

joyes please him not, nor can content that foule, San IX. which hath ever felt sweet communion with Christ. Again how should we pray with earnestneffe of affection, Thy Kingdome come (in the time of prosperity) except there were somewhat in this kind to raife up the foule to defire to be gone ? Now it is our subjection to these alterations and changes, ebbings and flowings, fometimes to have the fence of Gods love in Chrift. and fometimes to want it, fometimes to feele his love, and fomtimes againe the fruits of his anger and displeasure, which serves exceedingly to stir up mens defires of Heaven.

5. In this place here, the especiall end was, To correct the fecurity, and ill carriage of the

Church.

And likewise, To prepare the Church by this defertion, and feeming for faking for nearer communion : For indeed Christ did not for fake her, but to her feeling, to bring her in the fequell to have nearer communion and union with himself then ever the had before, God forfakes, that he may not forfake; he feemes ftrange, that he may be more friendly: This is Christs usage, he personates an adversary, when he intends to shew the greatest effects of bis love, as we may fee afterwards in the passages following.

And alfo, To make us to know throughly the bitternesse of fin, that we may grow to a further hatred of that which deprives us of fo fweet a communion: We think fin a trifle, and never know it enough, till the time of remptation, that confci-

To correct our (ecurity.

To prepare the foule for a mearer communio

know throughly what the bit. terneffe of fin is

SERITX.

That wee may tafte a little what Christ suffered. ence be awakened and opened, that it appeares in its right colours.

And then again, That we may know what Christ Suffered, and underwent for us in the sence of Gods wrath in the absence of his favour for a time. This the humane Nature could never have suffered, if his divinity had withdrawne it felfe. Now all of us must fip of that cup whereof Christ drank the dregs, having a raft what it is to have God to forfakeus. For the most part, those beleevers who live any time (especially those of great parts) God deales thus with, weaker Christians he is more indulgent unto ; at fuch times we know of what use a Mediatour is, and how miserable our condition were without fuch an one, both to have borne and overcome the wrath of God for us, which burden he could never have undergone it, but had funke under it, but for the Hypeflatical union.

Use 1.
Not to censure other Christians wanting comfort.

Let us not therefore censure any Christian, when we find that their conse hath been good and gracious; yetnotwithstanding they seeme to want comfort, let us not wonder at them, as if God had utterly for sken them; Indeed sometimes they thinke themselves for sken, and the world thinkes them so too, that God regards them not: They are people of no respect either to God or to others, as you have the Church in the Psalmes complaining, as if God had forsaken them, so they thinke themselves for sken, and the world thinks them so too, and neglects them; therefore in so doing we shall censure the

Pfal. 44 9.

gene-

generation of the Righteous. It was thus with Sun .IK. the Head of the Church, with the whole Church, and with every particular member; neither is it fit wee should alwayes enjoy the fence of Gods love. Christ by heavenly wifedome dispenseth of his sweetnesse, comforts and peace, as may frand with our foules best good and we fould as much take heed of cenfuring our selves in that condition, as if we were rejected and cast away of God. We must judge our selves at fuch times by Faith, and not by feeling; looking to the promises and Word of God, and not to our prefent sense and apprehenfion.

Againe if this be fo, Learne to prepare and look for it before hand, and to get fome grounds of comfort, some promises our of the word, and to keep a good confeience. O it is a heavy thing, when God shall seeme to be angry with us, and our conscience at the same time shall accuse us. when the devill shall lay fins hard to our charge, and some affliction at the same time lie heavy upon the fore and guilty foule. If we have not somewhat layed up before hand, what will become of the poore foule, when Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, and all shall seeme to be against it. There are few that come to Heaven, but they know what thefe things meane. It is good therefore to looke for them, and to prepare some comforts before hand.

But what here flould be the inward moving cause ? It is in the Church her selfe ; formarke

looke for de-

ertion.

R

the

SER.IX.

the coherence, the had turned off Christ with excules, pretences, and delatory answers, and now presently upon it Christ forfakes her in regard of her feeling, and of the fweet comfort the formerly enjoyed. The point is,

Objerv.2.

That the cause rests in our selves why Christ withdrames comfort from our foules.

Caufes of de fertion in our felves.

6.

7.

If we fearch our owne hearts we shall find it fo ; and usually the causes in our selves are these, as it was in the Church here. I. When we are unkind to Christ, and repell the sweet motions of the Spirit. 2. When we improve not the precious meansof salvation that we enjoy. 3. When we are varelesse of our conversation and company. 4. When we linger after carnal liberties and eafe. 5. When we yeeld to carnall policy, and shifts to keep us off from the power of Religion, to goe on in a lukewarme course. 6. When we linger after earthly things and comforts, and wrap our selves up in fleshly policy for case. 7. When we tremble not at Gods judgements, and threatnings, and at the fignes of them, with many fuch things. Where these dispofitions are, wee need not wonder if wee find not the comforts of Christ, and of the Holy-Ghost in us, with the gracious presence of his Spirit; the cause is in our selves. But security hath been at large spoken of before, where the Churches fleep was handled; therefore the point shall not be here inlarged, but only some use made of it, as may serve for the prefent purpose.

Ufer.

If Christ should take away the comforts that

we enjoy, and remove himfelte, and his dwel- | Sur. IX ling from us (for he is now yet among us, and knocks at our doores) doe we not give him just cause to depart ? what a spirit of flumber posfeffeth us, which will be awaked with nothing to sceke after Christ ? how few lay hold upon God, presse upon him, wrestle with him by prayer, to hide themselves before the evill day come, as they should doe! Therefore if Christ have absented himselfe a long time from the Church in generall, and withdrawne the comfort and presence of his ordinances; and in particular withheld the fweet comforts of our fpirits, and our peace, fo that we fee him in the contrary fignes of his displeasure and anger, as if he did not regard and respect us, we have given him just cause so to doe. Wee see here how the Church used Christ, and so doe we with the like fecurity, and a spirit of slumber, with unkindneffe, notwithstanding all the provocations that Christ useth to win us the leaves us not untill he be left first, for he defires to have nearer acquaintance, communion and fellowship with the foul; as we have feene in the former verse, My Love, my Dove, my Vndefiled, open to me, &cc. Therefore if we doe not enjoy more acquaintance with Christ then we doe, and walke more in the comforts of the Holy-Ghoft, it is meerly from our our owneindisposition and security; therefore let us cenfure our felves in this kind, and not call Christ an enemy, as if he had forgotten, and God had forfaken. Take heed of fuch a spirit of mur-

A&. 9 39

The beff may to recover Spirita. all comfort.

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muring: If such a stare befall us, let us labour to lay our hand upon our mouth, and to justifie Christ. It is just with thee thus to leave me, to give me over to this terrour, to deale thus with me, that have dealt so unkindly with thee; so to justifie God, and accuse our selves, is the best way to recover spiritual comfort.

Obferv.3,

Well, for the third point, That how foever Christ bie provoked by the Churches ingratitude. drowfineste, and carelese carriage, to leave her in regard of her feeling, and of inward comfort. Tet not with standing be is so gracious, as to leave something behind him, that hewes indeed, that he had not left the Church altogether but onely in some regard. For howfoever Christ (in regard of some order of his providence) leave it; yet in regard of another order of his providence, care and mercy, he doth not leave it, so as one way which her takes must fomtimes give place to another way of his working in ordering things. Sometimes he is present in a way of comfort, that is one order of his dispensation; and when he sees that that is neglected, then he withdrawes his comforts and hides his gracious countenace, yet he is then pre fent fill in another order and way, though wee discerne it not, that is, in a way of humbling the foule, letting it fee its finne : So here, howfoever Christ had withdrawn himselfe in regard of this manner of his dealing, in respect of comfort, that the Church did nor now fee his grace, favour, yet he left behind him a Spirit of grace to affect her heart with griefe, forrow, and fhame, and to

My bands dropt with myrrb, &c.

ftir up her endeavours to feeke after him (as it is San.IX. faid here) I rofe to open to my Beloved, and my hands dropt myrrb, and my fingers fweet fmelling myrrb, upon the handles of the locks.

Here observe thesethree things, which shall be briefly named, because they shall be touched

elfewhere.

Christs grace is the cause of our grace.

He first leaves myrrh, and then her fingers drop myrrh; our oyle is from his oyle; the head being anointed, the onle ranne downe to the skirts of Aarons curment ; Out of his fulneffere receive grace for grace; that is, our grace is answerable to the grace of Christ; we have all from him, favour for his favour, because he is beloved, we are beloved; we have the grace of Sanctification from him, he was fanctified with the Spirit, therefore we are fanctified; we have Grace of priviledge for his Grace, he is the Sonne of God, therefore we are Sonnes; Hee is the heire of Heaven, therefore we are heires ; fothat of his grace it is wee receive all, whether we take grace for favour, or for the grace of Sancti. fication, or the grace of Priviledge and Prerogative, all our graces are from his, our myrrh from his myrrb.

This should teach us, the necessity of dependance upon Christ, for whatsoever we have or would have; which dependance upon Christ is the life of our life, the foule of our foules.

Againe observe from hence, that the Churches fingers dropped myrrh when the opened

Objerv.

Pfal. 133.3. & 36.9. Ich.1,16.

the doore, and ftirred up her felfe to endeavour. When first her bowels were moved, then she makes to the doore, and then her hands dropped myrrh, fo that,

Observ. 1 Chr. 28, 20.

We finde experience of the grate of Christ, effecially when me stirup our felves to endeavour. Arise and be doing, and the Lord shall be with thee (faith

David to Solamon) to let us rouze no our felves to endeavour, and we shall find a gracious presence of Christ, and a bleffed affirkance of the Spirit of Christ who wil thew himself in the midst of endeavours To him that bath finell be given : what is that To him that hath(if he exercise and stir up thegrace of God in him that be given. Therfore let us firre up the graces of God inus, let us fall upon actions of obedience, fecond them with prayer; whatfoever we pray for and delire, fer upon the practife thereof, we macke God elfe. except we endeavour for that we define. There

hand upon the looke. Lipesh to any Christians experience, if in the midft of obedience they doe not find that comfor they looked for and that it is meat and drink to doe Gods will; therefore keep not off and fav. I am dead and drowfie, therefore I fall be fill fo : You are deceived, fall upon obedience and practifing of holy duries and in the midft thereof shon thalt, find the prefence and affiliance of Gods Spirit, that will comfort s herein dronged murrh when the coods

was myath left on the doore, but the feeles it not till the arose, opened the doore, and layed her

The

Mat. 25.29.

The third thing observable from hence is this, San. IX.
That Gods Graces are freet.

Plealant and fweet, compared here to myrth. which was an ingredient in the holy orle. Grace makes us fweet, prayers are fweet, asir is, Rev. 8. 4. Christ mingleth them with his owne sweet odours, and so takes and offers them to God. Holy Obedience is fweet and delightfull to God and to the conscience, it brings peace and delight to others, therefore they are called fruits; fruit doth not onely imply and shew the iffuing of good things from the root, but there is also a pleafantnesse in it : so there is a delightfulnesse in good works, as there is in fruit to the taft therefore if wee would be fweet and delightfull to God, let us labour to have grace. If wee would thinke of our felves with contentment, and have inward sweetnesse, Let us labour for the graces of Gods Spirit, these are like myrrh. The wicked are an abomination unto the Lord, who abhorres them, and what foever is in them : But, the righteous and fincere man is his delight. Therefore if we would approve our felves to God, and feele that he hath delight in us, labour to be fuch as he may delight in.

Wherefore let the discouraged soule make this use of it; not to be afraid to doe that which is good upon feare we should sinne. Indeed finne will cleave to that we doe, but Chriff will pardon the finne, and accept that which is fweet of his owne Spirit. Let us not effective bafely of that which Christ esteemes highly of; nor

Observ.z.

Prov. 15.8.

Ufe.

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let that be vile in our eyes that is precious in his : let us labour to bring our hearts to comfortable obedience, for it is a sweet facrifice to God.

Now whence came all this & from this that is mentioned ver. 4. My Beloved put in his band by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him. First for that expression, he put his finger in by the hole of the doore. It implies here, that Christ before he departed left by his Spirit an impression on the Churches heart, which deeply affeeted her to feekeafter him.

Exod. 8.19.

1 Cor. 3.7.

The Fingers looken of, are nothing but the power of his Spirit, as the usuall Scripture phrase is, Thu is Gods finger, Gods mighty hand, without which all ordinances are ineffectuall. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but all is nothing without the working of the Spirit: The motions whereof are most strong, being Gods finger, whereby he wroughtall that affection in the Church, which is here expressed. Christ before he leaveth the Church, puts bis finger into the hole of the doore; that is he works somewhat in the foule by his Spirit, which stirred up a confrant endeavour to seeke after him. For why else followes it? her bowels were moved after him. which implies a worke of the Spirit upon her bowels, exprest in her griefe for his absence, and shame for her refusing his entrance, and whereby her heart was moved, and turned in her to feeke after him. From whence thus explained, observe.

That

That outward meanes will doe no good, unleffe the San. IX. finger of Christ come to doc all that is good.

Obferv.

The finger of Christ is the Spirit of Christ, that is, a kinde of Divine power goes from him in hearing and speaking the word of God, and in prayer, there is more then a mans power in all thefe; if thefe work any effect, Chrift must put bu finger in; when duties are unfolded to us in the Ministery of the word, all is to no purpose, but the founding of a voice, unleffe the finger of Christ open the heart, and worke in the foule.

Ufer.

Let us make this use of it therefore not to reft in any meanes whatfoever, but defire the presence of Christs finger to move, and to work upon our hearts and foules. Many careleffe Christians goe about the ordinances of God, and never regard this power of Christ, this mighty power, the finger of Christ. Thereupon they finde nothing at all that is divine & spirituall wrought in them: For as it required a God to redeeme us. to take our nature, wherein he might restore us: fo likewise it requires the power of God to alter our natures. We could not be brought into the state of grace without Divine sarisfaction; and we cannot be altered to a frame of grace without a Divine finger, the finger of God working upon our hearts and foules. This should move us in all the ordinances of God that wee attend upon, to lift up our hearts in the midst of them. Lord, let me feele the finger of thy Spirit writing thy word upon my heart, Turne us O Lord, and we shall be turned. Pray forthis quickSER.IX.

quickning and inlivening; for this strengthening Spirit all comes by it. 2. From this that it is said here, That Christ puts his singer into the hole of the doore before heremoved it, and withdrew himselfe. Observe,

Observ.z.

How graciously Christ doth deale with us, That he doth alwayes leave some grace, before he doth offer to depart ? Let us therefore for the time to come, lay, and store this up as a ground of comfort, that however Christ may leave us, yet notwithflanding he will never leave us wholly, but as he gave us his holy Spirit at first, so he wil contime him in us by some gracious work or other, either by way of comfort, or of ftrength to uphold us. Perhaps we may need more forrow, more humilitythen of any other grace: For Winter is as good for the growing of things as the Spring: because were it not for this, where would be the killing of weeds and wormes, and preparing of the ground, and land for the Spring : Soit is as needfull for Christians to find the presence of Christ, in the way of humiliation and abasement. caufing us to afflict our owne foules, as to feele his presence in Peace, Joy, and Comfort. In this life we cannot be without this gracious dispensation. We may therefore comfort our felves, that howfoever Christ leaves us, yet he will alwayes leave fomewhat behind him, as here he left fome myreb after him upon the handle of the doore; fome myrrb is left alwayes behind him upon the fool, which keeps it in a frate and frame of grace. and fweetens it. Myrrh was one of the ingredients ents in the holy oyle, as it is, Exad. 30.30; and so this leaving of myrrh behind him, signifies the oyle of grace left upon the soule, that inabled the Church to doe all these things, which are after spoken of.

But you will fay, How doth this appeare, when in some desertion a Christian finds no grace, strength, or comfort at all e that nothing

is left ?

It is answered, they alwayes doe. Take those who at any time have had experience of the love of God, and of Christ formerly sake them at the worst, you shall find from them some sparkles of grace, broken speeches of tryed secret comfort, fome inward frength and ftrugling against corruptions, their spirits endeavouring to recover themselves from linking too low, and with something with flanding both despaire and corruption. Take a Christian at the worst, there will bea discovery of the Spirit of Christ left in him, notwithstanding all desertion. This is universally in allin fome measure, though perhaps it is not difcerned by Christian himselfe, but by those that are able to judge. Sometimes others can read our evidences better then our felves. A Christian that is in temptation cannot judge of his owne effare, but others can and fo at the very worst he hath alwayes formwhat left in him, whereby he may bee comforted, Christ never leaves his Church and Children that are his wholly Thosetbat are wholly left they never had saving Brace, as Achitophel, Cain, Saul, and Judas were

SEE.IX.

Object.

Anfw.

Ser. IX.

Ioh.13.1.

lest to themselves; but for the Children of God, if ever they found the power of sanctifying grace, Christ whom he loves, he loves to the end; From whom he departs not, unlesse he leaves somewhat behind him, that sets an edge upon the desires to seeke after him.

U/02.

Make this fecond use of it, To magnifie the gracious love and mercy of Christ, That when we deserve the contrary to be lest altogether, yet notwithstanding so graciously he deales with us.

Behold in this his dealing the mercy of Christ, he will not suffer the Church to be in a state of security, but will rather (to cure her) bring her to another opposite state of griefe and sorrow, as we shall see in the next point, how that which Christ lest in the heart of the Church, so afflicted her, That her bowels were turned in her. Wherupon she riseth, seekes, and enquires after Christ by the watchmen and others. So she saith of her selse.

My bowels were moved in me,&c.

What was that? My heart was affected, full of forrow and griefe for my unkind dealing with Christ. Hereby those affections were stirred up (that were afore sleepy and secure) to godly griefe, sorrow, and shame: For God hath planted affections in us, and joyned them with conscience, as the Executioners with the Judge: So that when as conscience accuse the fany sinne, either of omission or commission, affections are ready to be the executioners within us. Thus to prevent eternal damnation, God hath set up a Throne

in our own hearts to take revengeand correction Sax. IX. by our owne affections, godly forrow and mourning: as here the Church faith, My bowels were turned is me. It was a shame and griefe, springing out of leve to Christ that bath been fo kind, patient and full of forbearance to her. My bowels were turned in me, that is, forrow and griefe were upon me for my unkind dealing.

The observation from hence is.

That fecurity, and a cold dull fate, produceth a contrary temper; that is those that are cold dull secure, and put off Christ, he suffers them to fall

into tharp forrowes and griefes.

We usually fay, cold diseases must have hot and sharp remedies : It is most true spiritually. fecurity, which is a kind of lethargy (a cold difease) forgetting of God, and our dury ro him. must have a hot and sharp cure; and the lethargy is best cured by a burning ague. So Christ deales here, he puts his finger in at the hole of the doore, and leaves grace behind to work upon the bowels of the Church, to make her grieve and be ashamed for her unkind dealing. Thus he cures fecurity by forrow. This is the best conclufion of fin.

And we may observe withall, That even fine of omiffion they bring griefe, fhame, and former; And in the iffue through Christs sanctifying them, these which they breed, consume the Parent; that is, finne brings forth forrow flame, and griefe, which are a meanes to lecure finne, a Seenrity breeds this moving of the bonels; which me

Obfero.

Objerv.

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wing helps feewrity. Would we therefore prevent forrow, fhame, and griefe: Take heed then of feewrity the cause that leads to them; yea of sames of omission, wherein there is more danger then in sinnes of Commission. The same of carnall wished men are usually sinnes of Commission, most which breake out outragiously, and thereby taint themselves with open sins. But the sinnes of Gods people (who are nearer to him) are for the most part sinnes of Omission, that is, negligence, coldnesse, carelessensisted in duty, want of zeale, and of care they should have in stirring up the graces of God in them, as the Church here, which did not give way to Christ, nor shooke off security.

accurity.

Let us efteem as fleightly as we will of finnes of Omillion, and carelefnesse, they are enough to bring men to hell, if God be not the more mercifull. It is not required onely that we doe no harme, and keep our selves from outward evils : but we must doe good in a good manner, and have a care to be fruitfull and watchfull, which if we doenot, this temper will bring griefe, shame, and forrow afterwards : As here even for finnes of Omiffion, deadnesse, and dulnesse, we see the Church is left by Christ, and her bowels are turned in her: For carelesse neglect, and omission of duty to God, is a prefage, and forerunner of some downefall and dejection. And commonly it is true, when a man is in a fecure and careleffe efface, a man may read his deftiny (though he have been never so good) nay the rather, if he be good.

2.60

Use.

Such a one is in danger to fall into some sharp Suz.IX. punishment or into some fin; tor of all states and tempers, God will not fuffer a Christian to be in a fecure, lazie, dead state, when he cannot performe things comfortably to God, or himselfe. or to others; a dead secure estate is so hatefull to him(decay in our first love, this lukewarme temper) that he will not endure it, it either goes before some great finne, crosse, affliction, or judgement.

My bowels were moved in me.

And good reason, it was a sutable correction to the finne wherein the offended : For Christ his bowels were turned towards her in love and pitty, My love, my dove, my undefiled, in which case she neglecting him, it was fit shee should find moving of bowels in another sence (out of love too) but in shame and mourning. Christ here leaves her to seeke after him, that had waited and attended her leifure before, as we shallifee after.

The next thing we may hence observe in that, That her bowels were turned in her from fomething left in the hole of the doore by the Spirit of Christ, is.

That Christ hath our affections in his government.

He hath our bowels in his rule and government, more then we our felves have. We cannot of our felves rule our griefe, shame, forrow, or fuch affections as thefe. The wifest man in the world cannot award griefe, and forrow, when

San. IX.

God will turne it upon his bowels, and make a man ashamed and confounded in himselfe. All the wir and policy in the world cannot suppresse those affections; for Christ rules our hearts. The hearts of Kings are in his band, as the rivers of water. as well as the hearts of ordinary persons.

If he fet any thing upon the foule to afflict it and cast it downe, it shall afflict it, if it be but a

Prov. 11.1.

sonceit, if he will take away the reines from the foule, and leave it to its owne passion, removing away its guard; for he by his Spirit guards our foules with peace, by commanding of tranquillity: So as let him but leave it to its felse, and it will teare it felse in sunder; as Achieophel, who being left to himselse, did teare himselse in pieces; cain also being thus left, was disquieted, tormented, and wracked himselse. So Indas in this case being divided in himselse, you see what became of him; Let Christ but leave us to our own passion of forrow, what will become of us but misery: He hath more rule therefore of our passi-

2 Sam. 17.23.

Gen.4

Mat.27-3,4

Use.

we would.

Therefore this should strike an awe in us of God, with a care to please him: Por there is not the wisest man in the world, but if he remove his guard from his soule, and leave him to himselfe: If there were no Devill in hell, yet he would make him his owne tormenter and executioner; therefore the Apostle makes this sweet promise, Phil. 4.7. He bids them pray to God; And the

onsthen we our felves have, because we cannot rule them graciously, nor can we flay them when

DEAGE

peace of God which paffeth all under franding fould SER. IX. [guard] their foules, &c. So the word is in the originall. It is a great matter for the keeping of Gods people, to have their foules guarded.

Her bowels were turned in her.

Here againe, as the conclusion of all this, we seeing this estate of the Church, may wonder at Christs carriage towards her in this world. Christ is wonderfull in his Saints, and in his goodnesse towards them; sometimes alluring them, as wee fee Christ the Church here; wondrous in patience, notwithstanding their provocation of him; wondrous in his defertions; wondrous in leaving Comething behind him in desertions. Those that are his, hee will not leave them without grace, whereby they shall seeke him againe. Nay, the falling out of lovers shall be the renewing of fresh and new love, more constant then ever the former was. Thus our bleffed Saviour goes beyond us in our deferts, taking advantage (even) of our fecurity (for our greater good) making all worke to good in the iffue, which shall end in a more neare and close communion between Christ and his Church, then ever before. Carnall men feele not these changes, ebbings and flowings; they are not acquainted with Gods forfakings. Indeed their whole life is nothing but a forfaking of God, and Gods forfaking of them, who gives them outward comforts, peace and friends in the world, where-

Thef 3.

Rom. 8.28.

San.IX.

Pfal.35.19.

in they folace themselves; but for inward communion with him, any strength to holy duties, or against finne, for to be instruments for Gods honour and fervice, to doe any good, they are carelesse: For they live hereto serve their owne turnes, leaving their state and inheritance behind them. The Scripture faith, They have no changes, therefore they feare not God, and fo they goe downe to Hell quietly and fecurely. O but it is otherwise with Gods Children, they are toffed up and downe, God will not fuffer them to profper, or live long in a fecure, drowfie, finfull state, the continuance wherein is a fearefull evidence, that fuch an one as yet hath no faving grace, nor that he yet belongs to God, feeing Christ hates such an estate, and will not suffer his to be long therein, but will shift and remove them from veffell to veffell, from condition to condition, till hee have wrought in them that disposition of soule, that they shall regard, and love him more and more, and have nearer and nearer communion with him.

theon who gives the mount, rd

THE

SER.X.



the coule table day some of back

The tenth Sermon.

CANT. V. VI.

I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himselse, and was gone; my soule failed when he spake, I sought him but could not find him, I called him, but he gave no answer.



Hus we fee that the life of a Christian is trouble upon trouble, as wave upon wave. God will not fuffer us to rest in security, but one way or other he will fire us out of

our starting holes, and make us to run after him; how much better were it for us then to doe our works cheerfully and joy fully, fotoran as we may obtaine, then to be thus hurried up and downe, and through our owne default comming into desertions, and there receiving rebukes and blowes, and delayes ere we have peace againe, as it fell out with the Church in the sequell, for this Text is but the beginning of her seeming misery. The watchmen after this, found her, and wounded her, &c. But Heaven is more worth then all, now that her affections are set on fire, from thence she bestirs her selfe, is resolute to find out her beloved,

S.

whom

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whom she highly values above all this world, How her affections were stirred by Christs putting in his singer at the hole of the doore we have heard. Now followes her action thereupon, for here is rising, opening, seeking, calling and enquiring after Christs.

Action followes affection. After her bowels are moved, the arifeth and openesh, from whence we

may further observe,

Observ.

That where truth of affection is it will discover it selfein the outward man, one way or other. If there be any affection of love and piety to God, there will be eyes lift up, knees bended downe, and hands stretched forth to Heaven. If there be any griefe for finne, there will be the face dejected, the eyes looking downe, fome expression or other: If there be a defire, there will be a making forth to the thing defired : for the outward man is commanded by the inward, which hath a kind of foveraigne commanding power over it, and fayes, doe this and it doth it, speake this and it fpeakes it therefore those whose courses of life are not gracious, their affections and their hearts are not good; for where the affections are good, the actions will be furable. Her bowels were moved in her, and presently she shewes the fruth of her affection, in that sheet maketh after him.

1. Her foule failed when be fake.

2. She makes after bim,

My foule failed when be space, I fought him but I could not find him.

O

Of Christs withdrawing himselfe we spake in San.X. generall before, wherfore we will leave that and proceed.

My foule failed when he hake.

That is, her foule failed when the remembred what he had spoke, when he stood at the doore. and faid, open to me my Sifter, my Love, my Dove, my Vndefiled, for my head is wet with the dew, &c. Now when Gods Spirit had wrought upon her, then the remembred what Christ had faid : All those sweet allurements were effectuall now unto her, especially when she saw that after those fweet allurements Christ had withdrawne himfelfe, for that is the meaning of these words (M) (oule failed when he (bake unto me) Hee did not speakenow; but her soule failed after he spake; for fo it should be read, that is, after the remembred his speech to her; for now when she opened he was not there, therefore he could not speak to her.

The word of Christ how soever for the present it be not effectuall, yet afterwards it will be in the remem. brance of it.

To those that are gracious, it will be effectuall when the Holy-Ghost comes to seale it further upon their heart: Christ spake many things to his Disciples which they forgot; but when afterwards the Holy Ghost the Comforter was come, his office was, to bring all things to their remembrance that they had forgotten before. The Holy-Ghost taught them not new things, but brought former things to their remembrance; for God will Obferv.

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will make the word effectuall at one time or other, perhaps the word we heare is not effectuall for the prefent, it may afterwards, many yeares after, when God awakes our consciences.

And as this is true of Gods Children, the feed now fowne in them perhaps will not grow up till many yeares after: foit is true alfo of those that are not Gods Children, they think they shall never heare againe of those things they heare. perhaps they will take order by fenfuality, hardening of their hearts (and through Gods judgements withall concurring) that confcience shall not awake in this world, but it shill awake one day; for it is put into the heart to take Gods part, and to witnesse against us for our finnes. It shall have and performe its office hereafter, use it as you will now, and it will preach over those things again that you now heare. You shall heare againe of them, but it shall be a barren hearing. Now we may heare fruitfully to doe us good, but afterwards we shall call to mind what wee have heard, and it shall cut us to the heart. Dives (we know) had Mofes and the Prophets to infruct him, but henever heeded them in his life. untill afterwardsto his torment : So men never heed what they beare and read, they put off all and lay their consciences afteep; but God will bring them afterwards to remembrance. But because it is a point especially of comfort to the Church.

gently upon the or dinances of

God.

Luk. 16.25.

Labour weall of us to make this use of it, to be

My Joule failed when he fake.

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be diligent and carefull to heare and attend upo the ordinances of God; for how foever that we heare is not effectuall for the prefent, but feems as dead feed cast into the heart, yet God will give it a body after, as the Apostle speakes, at one time or other. And that which we heare now, the Holy-Ghost will bring it to our remembrance when we stand in most need of it.

1 Ger. 14.18.

My soule failed when he spake.

She was in a spiritual structure and deliquium upon his withdrawing, whence the point considerable is,

Observ.

That Christ doth leave his Church sometimes, and bring it very low in their owne apprehensions, that their hearts fayle them for want of his presence: So it was with David, so with Ionah, so with the Church, Lam. 3-1. we see it at large.

Plal. 38. 2, 3. Ionah 2, 2.

The necessity of our soules, and of our estates require this, as sometimes a body may be so corrupt, that it must be brought as low as possible may be before there will be a spring of new and good bloud and spirits: so we may fall into such a state of security that nothing with bring us to a right temper, but extreame purging. And usually God deales thus with strong wits and parts (if they be holy) David and Solomon were men excellently qualified; yet when they tasted of the pleasures and contentments of the world too deep, answerably they had, and so (usually) others shall have such desertions as will make them smart for their sweetnesse, as was shewed before.

Reason.

S 4

But

SBR.X.

The beart finks.

I.
When God appears an enemy.
Iob 7.20,

When Christs love is absent and not selt. Simile.

When they miffe of former affiftance in boy duties.

But upon what occasions doth a Christian thinke especially, that God doth leave, forsake and fayle him.

First, This fayling and fainting of the soule is sometimes upon an apprehension, as if God and Christ were become enemies, as Iob saith, and as having set us as a But to shoot at, but this is not all that a gracious and pure heart sinkes

for.

But also secondly, Fortheabsence of Christs love, though it feele no anger. Even as to a loving Wife, her husband not looking lovingly upon her as he used to doe, is enough to cast her downe, and cause her spirits to sayle: so for God to looke upon the soule; put the case not with an angry, yet with a countenance withdrawne, it is sufficient to cast it downe; for any one that bath dependance upon another, to see their countenance withdrawne, and not to shew their face as before: If there be but a sweet disposition in them, it is enough to daunt and dismay them.

Nay, Moreover when they find not that former affiltance in holy duties, when they find that their hearts are flut up, and they cannot pray as formerly when they had the Spirit of God more fully; and when they find that they cannot beare afflictions with wonted patience, certainly Christ hath withdrawne himselfe (say they.) This is first done when wee heare the word of God not with that delight and profit as we were wont, when they find how they come neare to God in holy communion, and yet feele

not

not that sweet tast and relish in the ordinances SER.X.

of God as they were wont to doe; they conclude certainly God hath hid his face, whereupon they are cast downe, their spirits fayle. And doe not wonder that it should be so for it is so in nature; when the Sunne hides it felfe many dayes from the world, it is an uncomfortable time, the fpirits of the creatures lowre and wither; we fee it fo in the body, that the animall fpirits in the braine (which are the cause of motion and fence) if they be obstructed, there followes an Apoplexie and deadnesse. So it is between Christ and the soule, he is the Sunne of Righte. ousnesse, by whose beames we are all comforted and cheared, which when they are withheld, then our spirits decay and are discouraged. Summer and Winter arise from the presence and absence of the Sunne. What causeth the Spring to be so cloathed with all those rich ornaments ? the presence of the Sun which comes nearer then. So what makes the Summer and Winter in the foule, but the absence or presence of Christe what makes some so vigorous beyond others, but the presence of the Spirit? Asit is in nature, so it is here, the presence of Christ is the cause of all spirituall life and vigour; who when he withdrawes his presence a little, the soule fayles.

My soule failed when he spake to me, I sought him but I could not find him, I called but he gave me no answer.

The Church redoubleth her complaint to

Objerv.

fhew '

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shew her passion, A large heart bath large expreffions; she took it to heart that Christ did not shew himselfe in mercy; therfore she never hath done, I sought him, but I could not find him, I called, but he gave me no answer.

Objerv.

Affection makes eloquent and large expressions. But mainly observe from this fayling of the Church, The difference between the true children of God and others. The childe of God is cast down when he finds not the presence of God, as he was wont, his spirits faile. A carnall man that neverknew what this presence meant, regards it not, can abide the want of it; he finds indeed a prefence of God in the creature which he thinks not of; there is a sweetnesse in meat, drinke, rest, and a contentment in honour, preferment, and riches; And thus God is present alwayes with him. But other presence he cares not for ; nay, he shuns all other presence of God, labouring to avoid his spirituall presence: For what is the reafon that a carnall man fluns the applying of the word and the thinking of it, but because it brings God neare to his heart, and makes him prefent? What is the reason he shuns his own conscience; that he is loath to heare the just and unanswerable acculations that it would charge upon him, but because he cannot abide the presence of God in his conscience. What is the reason he fhuns the fight of holier and better men then himselfe ? they present God to him being his Image, and call his siones to memory, and upbraid his wicked life. Hence comes that fatani-

Kin. 17.18,

call hatred more then humane in carnall vile SBR.X. men, to those that are better then themselves, because they hate all presence of God, both in the Word, Ministery, and all Gods holy servants; all such presence of God they hate, whereof one maine reason is, because they are malefactors, wicked rebels, and intend to be fo. And as a malefactor cannot endure so much as the thought of the Judge, so they cannot thinke of God otherwise (in that course they are in) then of a Judge, whereupon they tremble and quake at the very thought of him, and avoyd his prefence.

A& 24.15.

You know that great man Felix, Paul spake to in the Acts, when he spake of the judgement to come, and those vertues, as Temperance, and Righteousnesse, which he was void of, and guilty of the contrary vices, he quaked, and could not endure to heare him speake any longer. Wicked men love not to be arraigned, tormented, accufed and condemned before their time sherefore whatfoever prefents to them their future terrible estate, they cannot abide it. It is an evidence of a man in a cursed condition, thus not to endure the presence of God; but what shall God and Christsay to them at the day of judgement? It was the defire of fuch men not to have to doe with the presence of God here; and it is just with Christ to answer them there as they answer him now, Depart, depart, we will have none of thy wayes (fay they) Depart ye curfed (faith he) He doth but answer in their owne language, Depart ye

SIR. X.

curfed with the Devill and bis Angels.

But you see the Childe of God is cleane of another temper, he cannot be content to be without the presence of God and of his Spirit enlightning, quickning, strengthening and bleffing of him in spiritual respects. When he finds not his presence helping him, when he finds Christ his life is absent from him, he is presently discouraged: For, Christ wour life. Now when a mans life fayles all fayles, when therefore a man finds his spiritual trast and comfort not as it was before, then oh, the life of my life hath withdrawne himselfe, and so is never quiet till hee have recovered his life againe, for Christ is his

life.

And because there is a presence of God and of Christ in the Word and Sacraments, a sweet presence: the godly soule he droops and failes if he be kept from these, he will not excommunicate himselfe as many doe, that perhaps are asseep when they should be at the ordinances of God; but if he be excommunicated and banished, O how takes he it to heart! Psal. 42.7. As the Hart panteth after the water brooks, so longeth my soule after thee, O God. The whole 84. Psalme is to that purpose, O how amiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord of Hosts? He finds a presence of God in his Word and Sacraments, and when he doth not tast a sweet presence of God therein, he droops and finks.

A carnall man never heeds these things because he finds no sweetnesse in them, but the

godly

Col.3.4.

Col.3.4.

godly finding Christ in them they droop in the Sax.X. want of them, and cannot live without them, Whither shall we goe (faith Peter to Chrift) thou lah 6.68. hast the words of eternall life, I finde my foule quickned with thy speaking. So a soule that feels the quickning power of the ordinances, he will never be kept from the meanes of salvation, but he droops and is never well till he have recovered himfelfe againe ?

Againe, another difference may be observed. Carnall men when they find the fence of Gods anger, they feeke not Gods favour, but thinke of worse and worse still, and so run from God till they be in hell. But those that are Gods children, when they faile and find the sence of Gods displeasure, they are sensible of it, and give not over feeking to God, they run not further and further from him.

The Church here though the found not Christ present with her, yet shee seeks him still, and nevergives over.

Whence againe we may observe, That although the Church be faid to faile, and not to find Christ yes he is present then with her. For who inabled her to seeke him. To explaine this, there is a double prefence of Christ.

- I. Felt.
- 2. Not felt.

The presence felt, is when Christ is graciously prefent, and is withall pleased to let us know so fett. much, which is a Heaven upon Earth; the foule is in Paradife then, when the feeles the love of

Obfore.

That there is double profess of Chrift fels and not felt.

His prefence

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God feed abroad in the heart, and the favourable countenance of God shining upon her, then she despiseth the world, the devill and all, and walks as if the were halfe in Heaven already , for the finds a presence and a manifestation of it, a more glorious state then the world can affourd.

Chrifts unfelt fecret prefence

But, There is a presence of Christ that is secret, when he feems to draw us one way, and to drive us another, that we are both driven and drawne

at once when he feems to put-us away, and yet notwithflanding drawes us; when we find our foules goe to Chrift, there is a drawing power and presence, but when we find him absent, here is a driving away. As we see here in the Church and in the woman of Canaan, we fee what an anfwer the had from Christ; at first none, and then an uncomfortable, and laftly a most unkind anfwer. We must not give the childrens bread to dogs. Christ seemed to drive her away, but at the fame time he by his Spirit drawes her to him, and was thereby fecretly present in her heart to increase her faith. When Christ wrestled with Jacob, though he contended with him, yet the fame time he gave laceb power to overcome him, to be Ifrael a prevailer over him : fo at the fame time the Church feemes to faile and faint; vet notwithstanding there is a secret drawing

Mat. 1 5.

Gen. 32.

Chiero.

him.

It is good to observe this kind of Christs dealing, because it will keep us that we be not discouraged

power pulling her to Chrift, whereby the never gives over, but feekes and cals still after

couraged when we find him absent. If still there Saa.X. be any grace left moving us to that which is good: If we find the Spirit of God moving us to love the word and ordinances, to call upon him by prayer, and to be more inftant, certainly we may gather there is a hidden, fecret prefence here that drawes us to these things; nay more than the end of this feeming forfaking and strangenesse is to draw us nearer and nearer, and at length to draw us into Heaven to himselfe. Gods people are gainers by all their losses, stronger by all their weaknesses, and the better for all their erosfes whatfoever they are. And you shall find that the Spirit of God is more forceable in them after a frangeneffe, to ftirre them up more cagerly after Christ then before ; as here the Church doth for her eagernesse, constancy and instantneffe it groweth, as Christs withdrawing of himfelfe groweth.

Let us therefore learne hence how to indge of our felves, if we be in a dead liveleffe state, both in regard of comfort and of holy performances, whether we be content to be fo. If we be not contented, but make towards Christ more and more, it is a good figne that he hath not forfaken us, that he will come againe more eloriously then ever before. As here we shall fee after it was with the Church, he feemes strange, but it is to draw the Church to discover her affection, and to make her ashamed of her former unkindnesse, andro fit furer and hold fafter then fhe did before, all ends in a most sweet Wc communion.

Ule I. How to sudpe deal liveleffe eftate, both i regard of comfort and boly performances.

Snn. X.

"Use 2,
We should depend upon
Christ in a
scenning absence.

We should labour therefore to answer Christs deale in furable apprehensions of foule, when he is thus prefent fecretly, though hee feeme in regard of some comforts and former experience of his love to withdraw himselfe. It should teach us to depend upon him, and to beleeve though wee feele not comfort, yea against comfort, when we feele fignes of difpleasure. If he can love and support me, and ffrengthen my foule, and shew it a presence of that which is fit for mee. Certainly I should answer thus with my faith, I will depend upon him (though he kill me) as lob did; our foules should never give over feeking of Christ, praying and endeavouring, for there is true love where he feems to forfake and leave; therefore I ought in these desertions to cleave to him in life and in death.

edid before, all ends in a me

THE

SER.XI.



The eleventh Sermon.

CANT. V. VI.VII.

I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himselse, and was gone: my soule failed when he spake, I sought him but could not find him, I called him, but he gave meno answer, &c.



He pride and security of the Spouse provokes the Lord her Husband oft to bring her very low, they being incompatible with Christs residence.

Pride is an affection contrary to his prerogative, for it fees up somewhat in the soule higher then

God the highest.

Security is a dull temper, or rather diffemper that makes the foule neglect her watch, and relye upon fome outward priviledge, where this ill couple is entertained, there Christ useth to withdraw himselse, even to the failing and fainting of the soule.

The Spoule is here in her fainting fit, yet the feeks after Christ, still the gives not over: to to-nas, I am east out of thy presence (sayes he) yet not-

Ionah 2.

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withstanding I will looke toward thy boly Temple. And David, Pfal. 31.22.1 faidin my haft I am caft out of thy fight, yet notwithst anding thou heardest the vayce of my prayer. He faid it, but he faid it in his haft. Gods children are surprized on the sudden to thinke they are cast away; but it is in hast, and fo foon as may be they recover themselves. I faid it is my infirmity, faid David, Pfal. 72. It is but in a passion. Here then is the difference between the children of God and others in defertions, they arise, these lye still and despaire. There is life in the substance of the Oake that makes it lift up its head above ground, though it be cut downe to the stumps. Nay we see further here, the Church is not taken off for any discouragements, but her faith growes stronger, as the wemans of Canaan did.

Mat. 15.

Ifa.13.

The Reason whereof is, Faith lookes to the Promise, and to the nature of God, not to his

present dealing.

And then God by a secret worke of his Spirit (though he seeme to be an enemy yet notwithstanding) drawes his children nearer and nearer to him by such his dealing. All this strangenesse is but to mornifie some former lust, or consume some former dregs of security.

I lought him but I could not find him.

Here one of the greatest discouragements of all other is, when prayer (which is lest to the Church as a salve for all sores) hath no answer. This is the complaint, but indeed an errour of the Church; for Christ did heare the

Church

Church though hee feemed to turne his SER.XI. backe.

But how hall we know that God beares our prayers?

Amongst many other things this is one; when he gives us inward peace, then he heares our prayers, for so is the connexion, Phil. 4.6,7.

Or fecondly, If we find a Spirit to pray still, a Spirit to wait and to hold out, it is an argument that God either hath or will heare those

prayers.

And as it is an argument that God heares our prayers, so is it of the presence of Christ; for how could wee pray but from his inward presence ? Christ was now present, and more present with the Church when he seemed not to be found of her, then he was when she was secure, for whence else comes this eagernesse of defire, this fpirit of prayer, this earnest nesse of feeking?

I called but he gave no answer, &c.

Directions how to carry our felves in fuch an estate. How shall we carry our selves when it fals out that our hearts faile of that we feeke for, when we pray without successe, and find not a present answer, or are in any such like state of desertion ?

1. We must beleeve against beliefe (as it were) hope against hope, and trust in God, Howsoever he thewes himfelfe to us as an opposite. It is no matter what his present dealing with his Church and Children here is, the nature of Faith is to breakthrough all opposition, to see the Sun be- 2 Cor. 6.

How to know that God bears our prayers. If be therewith gives in inward Doace. Phil 4.

A Spirit to bold cut in prayer though without beace.

Rom.4.

SER.XI.

hind a cloud, nay to see one contrary in another, life in death, a calme in a storme, &c.

2. Labour for an absolute dependancy upon Christ with a powerty of spirit in our selves, this is the end of Christs withdrawing himselfe, to purge us of

selfe-confidence and pride.

3. Stirre up your graces, for as nature joyning with phyficke helps it to worke and carry away the malignant humours: fo by the remainder of the Spiritthat is in us, let us fet all our graces on work untill we have carried away that that offends and clogs the foule, and not finke under the burden, for this is a speciall time for the exercifing of faith, hope, love, diligence, care, watch-

fulnesse, and such like graces.

And let us know for our comfort, that even this conflicting condition is a good estate. In a slicke body it is a signe of life and health approaching when the humours are stirred, so as that a man complains that the physick works. So when we take to heart our present condition, though we faile and find not what we would, yet this will worke to the subduing of corruption at length. It is a signe of suture victory when we are discontent with our present ill estate. Grace will get the upper hand, as nature doth when the humors are disturbed.

4. Againe, when we are in such a seeming forlorne estate, Les we have researse to sormer experience. What is the reason that God vouchfases his children for the most part in the beginning of their conversion (in their first love) experience

I fought bim but I could not find bim,

experience of his love to ravishment ! It is, that | San XI. afterwards they may have recourfe to that love of God then felt to support themselves ; and withall to ftirre up endeavours and hope; that finding it not so well with them now, as formerly it hath been, by comparing flate wirh flate, de- Hof. 2.7. fires may be stirred up to be as they were, or rather better.

And as the remembrance of former experiences ferves to excite endeavour, fo to ftirre up Hope, I hope it shall be as it was, because God is Immutable. I change, but Christ alters not, the inferiour elementary world changes, here is faire weather and foule, but the Sunne keeps his perpetuall course; and as in the glomiest day that ever was, there was light enough to make it day, and to diftinguishit from night (though the Sunne did not shine:) So in the most disconsolate state of a Christian Soule, there is light enough in the foule, to shew that the Sun of Righteou neffe is there, and that Christ hath shined upon the foule, that it is day with the foule and not night.

5. And learne when we are in this condition to wait Gods leifure, for he hath waited ours. It is for our good, to prepare us for further bleffings, to mortifie and fubdue our corruptions, to inlarge the capacity of the foule, that the Lord ablents himfelfe, therefore Bernard faith well, Tibi accidit, &c. Christ comes and goes away for our good; when he withdrawes the fence of his love, the foule thereupon is stretched with defire,

Pfal-112.4.

SER.XI.

that it may be as it was in former time, in the dayes of old. Thus much for that, I fought him, but I could not find him, I called but he gave me mo answer.

Objett.

Mar. 7. 7.

Anfw.

Here wee must answer one objection before we leave the words. This feems to contradict other Scriptures, which promife that those that feeke shall find. It is true, they that feeke shall find, but not prefently. Gods times are the best and fittest. They that feeke shall find, if they feek constantly with their whole heart in all the meanes, Some doe not find, because they seeke in one meanes and not in another; they feeke Christ in reading, and not in the ordinance of hearing, in private meditation, but not in the communion of Saints; we must goethrough all meanes to seeke Christ, not one must be left. Thus if we will feeke him, undoubtedly hee will make good his promise; nay in some fort, he is found before be is fought, for he is in our soules to flire up defire of feeking him; he prevents us with defires, and answers us in some fort before we pray, when he gives us a Spirit of Prayer, it is a

Ma.63.34.

Indoing of grace by the quantity, and not by the value. I Pet, I.

i. That they judge grace by the quantity, and me by the value and price of it, whereas the least measure of grace and comfort is to be esteemed,

themselves with inthis kind, these betwo.

pleage to us, that be meanes to answer us. Therefore it is a spiritual deceit, when we thinke Christ is not in us, and we are neglected of him, because we have not all that we would have. Among many other deceits that Christians deceive

because it is an immortall feed cast into the sonle by an immortall God, the Father of Eternity.

2. Another deceit is, That we judge of our felves by fence and feeling, and not by faith.

The watchmen that went about the City found me and smote me, and tooke away my vaile fromme.

Here the poore Church after the fetting down of her own exercise in her desertion, now sets out some outward ill dealing she met with, and that from those that should have been her greatest comforters. The watchmen that went about the City sound me, they wounded me, the keepers of the wals tooke away my vaile from me.

Thus we see how trouble followes trouble, one depth cals upon another: Inward desertion and ontward affliction goe many times together. The troubles of the Church many times are like tobs messengers, they come fast one upon another; because God meanes to perfect the worke of Grace in their hearts, all this is for their good. The sharper the Winter the better the Spring. Learne hence first of all therefore in generall,

That it is no easie thing to be a found Christian.

We see here when the Church had betrothed her selfe to Christ, and entertained him into her garden, there after she sals into a state of security and sleep, whence Christ labours to rouze her up; then she useth him unkindly, after which he withdrawes himselfe, even so farre that her heart saylesher; then (as if this were not enough) the watchmenthat should have looked to her, they smite her, wound her, and take away her vayle. See

SER.XI.
Indging of our
felves by fense
and feeling,

Objerv.

SRR.XI.

here the variety of the ulage of the Church, and changes of a Christian, not long in one stare, he is ebbing and flowing.

Therefore let none distaste the way of Godlineffe for this, that it is fuch a state as is subject to change and variety; whereas carnall men are

upon their lees, and find no changes.

Obiett.

Bur you will fay, All Christians are not thus toffed up and downe, so deserted of God, and persecuted of others.

Anfw.

I answer, Indeed there is difference. Whence comesthat difference ? from Gods liberty;it is a mystery of the Sanduary, which no man in the world can give a reason of, why of Christians both equally beloved of God, some should have a fairer passage to Heaven, others rougher and more rugged; It is a mystery hid in Gods breaft. It is sufficient for usif God will bring us any way to Heaven, as the bleffed Apostle faith. If by any meanes I might attaine to the refurrection of the dead, either through thicke or thin, if God will bring me to Heaven it is no matter. If I by any meanes.

Phil.3-11.

The Watchmen that went about the City, Smote me.&c.

By the Watchmen here are meant especially governours of State and Church.

Why are they called Watchmen?

It is a borrowed speech taken from the custome of Ciries that are beleagered , for policies fake they have Watchmen to descry the danger they are lyable unto : fo Magistrares be watch-

watchmen of the State, Ministers are the watch men for Soules, watching over our Soules for good.

Why doth God afe Watchmen?

Not for any defect of power in him, but for demonstration of his goodnes; for he is the great Watchman, who watcheth over our Commonwealths, Churches and Persons; he hath an eye that never fleeps, He that watcheth Ifrael weither Pfal, 114.4. flumbers nor fleeps; yet notwithstanding he hath Subordinate Watchmen, not for defect of power, but for demonstration of goodnesse; he manifelts his goodnesse in that he will use variety of Subordinate Watchers.

And likewise to shew his power in using many instruments, and his care for us when he keeps us together with his owne subordinate means.

And in this that God hath fet over us Watchers(Ministers especially) It implyes that our fouls are in danger; and indeed there is nothing in the world fo befet as the foule of a poore Christian: who hath so many and so bad enemies as a Chriftian ; and among ft them all, the worst and greatest enemy he hath is nearest to him, and converfeth daily with him, even himselfe . Therefore there must needs be Watchmen to discover the deceits of Satan and his instruments, and of our owne hearts, to discover the dangers of Ierusalem, and the errours and fins of the times wherein we live. The Church is in danger, for God hath fet Watchmen, now God and nature doth nothing in vaine or needlefly.

Againe,

SER.XI. Heb. 13.17.

> Quest. An(W.I

SER.XI.

Argumenti

Shewing the

preciousnes

of the soule.

Againe, in that God takes such care for the foule, it shewes the wondrous worth of it. Many arguments there be to fnew that the foule is a precious thing, it was breathed by God at first, Christ gave his life to redeeme it; but this is an especiall one that God hath ordained and established a Ministery and Watchmen over it. And as God hath fet some men Watchmen over others, so hath he appointed every man to be a Watchman to himselfe. He hath given every man a City to watch over, that is, his owne estate and foule: therefore let us not depend altogether on the watching of others. God hath planted a con-(eience in every of us, and useth as others to our good: fo our owne care, wifedome, and forefight, these he elevateth and sanctifieth.

The Watchmen that went about the City found me,

they (mote me, they wounded me, &c.

Come wee now to the carriage of these Watchmen, those that should have been defen-

five prove most offensive.

How the Church was wounded by the Watchmen.

ı.

3. 3 Ioh.9. They smore the Church, and wounded her many wayes (though it be not discovered here in particular) as with their ill and scandalous life, and sometimes with corrupt dodrine, and otherwhiles with bitter words, and their unjust consures, as we see in the story of the Church, especially the Romish Church, they have excommunicated Churches and Princes; but not to speake of those Synagogues of Satan, come we nearer home, and we may see amongst our selves sometimes those that are Watchmen, and should

be for encouragement; they finite and wound Sax.XI. the Church, and take away her vaile.

What it is to take away the vaile.

You know in the times of the old Testament a vaile was that which covered women for modefty, to shew their subjection; and it was likewife an honourable ornament, They tooke away the vaile, that is, that wherewith the Church was covered, they tooke away that that made the Church comely, and laid her open, and as it were naked.

Now both these wayes, the Churches vaile is taken away by falfe and naughty Watchmen.

. 1. Asthevaile is a token of Subjection, when by their false Doctrines they labour to draw people from Christ, and their subjection to him.

The Church is Christs Spouse, the vaile was a token of subjection: Now they that draw the people to themselves, as in Popish Churches, that defire to fit high in the consciences of people, and so make the Church undutifull, They take away the vaile of subjection, and so force Christ to punish the Church, as we fee in the former ages.

2. As the vaile is for honour and comelineffe, fo they take away the vaile of the Church, when they take away the credit and efterm of the Church, when they lay open the infirmities and weakneffes of the Church. This is strange that the Watchmen should do this, yet not withstanding oftentimes it fals out fo, that those that by place are Warch men, are the himcreft enemies of the Church.

3 loh. 10.

Tby tooke away the vaile of ber fubjection.

ber bonour a comeline fe.

SOVETBE

governe and aske with themselves, would God SEE.XI. now if he were a Watchman of the flate do thus and thus, but I wish wofull experience did not witnesse the contrary.

So Ministers are Christs Embasadors, and should carry themselves even as Christ would

a Cor. 5.20

does they should strengthen the feeble knees and bind up the broken hearted, not discourage and not fow pillowes under the arme-holes of wicked and carnall men : But alas we fee the edge of the ordinance is oftentimes turned another way by the corrupt, proud, unbroken hearts of men, and the malice of Satan.

Ezek. 13.18.

U/62

Againe it should teach us, not to thinke the worse of any for the disgraces of the times. The Watchmen here take away the vaile of the Church, and her forwardnesse is disgraced by them:take heed therefore we entertaine not rall conceits of others, upon the entertainment they find abroad in the world, or among those that have a standing in the Church; for so we shall condemne Christ himselfe; how was he judged of the Priefts, Scribes, and Pharifees in his times ? and this hath been the lot of the Church in all ages, the true members thereof were called Hereticks and Schismaticks, the waile was taken off. It is the poylonfull pride of mans heart, that when it cannot raife it felfe by its owne worth, it will endeavour to raise it selfe by the ruine of others creditthrough lying flanders. The Devill Ich. 2. was first a flanderer, and lyar, and then a murtherer : he cannot mureher without be flanderfieft;

SAR.XII.

the credit of the Church must first be taken away and then she is wounded, otherwise as it is a usuall proverbe, Those that kill a dog make the world believe that he was mad first: so they alwayes first traduced the Church to the world, and then persecured her. Truth bath alwayes a scracht face. Falshood many times goes under better habits then its owne, which God fuffers to exercise our skill and wisedome that we might not depend upon the rash judgement of others, but might consider what grounds they have; not what men doe or whom they oppose, but from what cause. Whether from a Spirit of Envy, Idleneffe, Icaloufie, and Pride, or from good grounds: Elfe if Christ himselfe were on earth againe, we should condemne him, as now men doe the generation of the just, whom they fmite and wound, and take away their vaile from them.



The twelfth Sermon.

CANT. V. VII.

The Watchmen that went about the City found me, they smoteme, they wounded me, the Keepers of the wals tooke away my vaile from me.



He Watchner (Those that by their place and standing should be so) they smote the Church (an Bernard complaines al-

most 500 yeares agoe) alas, alas faith he, those San.XII. that doe feeke priviledges in the Church, are the first in persecuting it; and (as his fashion is to fpeake in a kind of Rhetoricke) they were not paftors, but impostors. There be two ordinances withour which the world cannot fland.

I. Magifracie. 2. Ministerie. Lucia nant binow

Magistrates are nursing Fathers, and nursing Mothers to the Church.

Ministers are Watchmen by their place and

standing.

Now for Shepheards to become welves, for Watchmento become (miters, what a pittifull thing is it; but thus it is, the Church hath been alwayes perfecuted with these men, under pretence of Religion, which is the sharpest persecution of all in the Church; it is a grievous thing to fuffer of an enemy, but worse of a country man, worse then that of a friend, and worst of all of the Church. Notwithstanding(by the way)we must know, that the perfecuted cause is not alway the best (as Austin was forced to speake in his time against the Donatists) Sarah was a type of the mayer the best. true, and Hagar of the falle Church. Now Sarah the corrected Hugar, therefore it followes not. that the fuffering cause is alway the better; therefore we must judge of things in these kind of pass fages by the cause, and not by the outward carriage of things to red mi shelller airlo

somhoggo They tooke away by vaile. What fall we doe in such cases, if we suffer any

The perfecuted fide is not al.

Ichargeyou O Daughters ,&c.

Sen.XII.

indignity, if the vaile be taken off. That is, if our shime, infirmities, and weaknesses be laid open by talle imputations.

Anfw.

In this case, it is the innocency of the Dove, that is to be laboured for, and withall the wisedome of the Serpent. If Innocency will not serve, labour for wisdome, as indeed it will not alone; the wicked would then labour for subtilty to disgrace righteous persons.

Object.

Anfw.

But what if that will not serve neither. Christ was wisedome it selfe, yet he suffered most; when Innocencie and wisdome will not do it (because we must be conformable to our head) then we must labour for patience, knowing that one haire of our heads shall not fall to the ground without the providence of the Almighty. Commend our case, as Christ did, by faith and prayer to God that judgeth.

I charge you, O Daughters of Hiernfalem, if you fee my Beloved, that you tell him, that I am ficke of Love, &c.

Here the Church after her ill usage of the Watchmen, is forced to the society of other Christians, not so well acquainted with Christ as her selfe: I charge ye o Daughters of Ierusalem, if you find my Beloved, &cc. Tell bim, &cc. What shall they tell bim.

Tell him I am ficke of Love.

The Church is reftleffe in her define and purfuit after Christ, till the find him, no opposition you fee cantake off her endeavour.

1. Chrift

I charge you O Daughters Ste.

1. Christ seemes to leave berinwardly.

2. Then she goeth to the Watchmen, they smite and wound her.

3. Then she hath recourse to the Daughters of lerusalem for belp.

Generally before we come to the particulars, from the connexion we may observe this,

That Love is a fire kindled from Heaven.

Nothing in the world will quench this Grace, no opposition, nay opposition rather whets and kindles endeavour.

The Church was nothing discouraged by the ill usage of the Watchmen, only she complaines the is not insensible. A Christian may without sinne be sensible of indignities, onely it must be the mourning of Doves, and not the roaring of Bears. It must not be murmuring and impariencie, but a humble complaining to God, that he may take our ease to heart, as the Church doth here: But as sensible as she was, she was not a whit discouraged, but seeks after Christ still in other means, if she find him not in one, she will try in an other: we see here the nature of love, if it be in any measure persect, it casteth out all seare of discouragements.

And indeed, It is the nature of true Grace to grow up with difficulties: As the Arke role higher with the waters, so likewise the soule growes higher and higher, it mounts up as discouragements and oppositions grow: Nay, the soule takes vigour and strength from discouragements, as the wind increaseth the slame: So the 289

SER.XIL

1.

3.

Objero.

Can. 8.7.

How farre we may be fenfible of injuries.

Ila 38.

The nature of true Grace.

Grace

SER.XII.

Grace of God, the more the winds and waves of affliction oppose it, with so much the more violence, it breaks through all oppositions, until it attains the defired hope.

A figne of coldme ffe in Religion. To apply it, Those therefore that are soone discouraged, that pull in their hornes presently, it is a signethey are very cold, and have but little grace; for where there is any strength of holy affection, they will not be discouraged, nor their zeale be quenched and damped; therefore they subordinate Religion to their owne ends, as your temporary believers. Where is any love to Christ: the love of Christ is of a violent nature, it swayes in the heart, as the Apostle speaks, The love of Christ constraineth us.

2 Cor. 5.14

Vie of encouragement and tryall. If we find this inconquerable resolution in our selves, notwithstanding all discouragements, to goe on in a good cause, let us acknowledge that fire to be from Heaven, let us not lose such an argument of the state of Grace, as suffering of afflictions with joy. The more we suffer, the more we should rejoyce, if the cause be good, as the Apostles, Act. 5.41. rejoyced that they were accounted worthy to suffer any thing.

I charge you, Oh Daughters of Iernfalem, if you find my Beloved, that ye tell him I am ficke of

Shee does to t

Shee goes to the Daughters of Ierusalem for help, whence we may learne.

That, If we find not comfort in one means, we must

Observ.

If we find not Christ present in one, seeke him

in

I charge you O Daughters, &c.	291
in another, and perhaps we shall find him where we least thought of him; sometimes there is more comfort in the society of poore Christians, then of the Watchmenthemselves. I charge you, O Daughters of Ierusalem, &c. Where we have, 1. A charge given.	See XII
2. The parties charged, the Daughters of Iern-	2.
falem. 3. The particular thing they are charged with, that is (if they find Christ) to tell him the is ficke of	3•
The parties charged, are the Daughters of Ieru- falem, the Daughters of the Church, which is called Ierufalem, from some resemblances be- tween Ierufalem and the Church; some sew shall betouched, to give light to the point. Ierufalem was a City compatt in it selfe (as the Psalmist faith) so is the Church, the body of	The proportis between Jera falem and the Church.
Christ: 'Ietusalem was chosen from all places of the world, to be the seat of God: so the Church is the seat of Christ, he dwels there in the hearts of his children.	3.
It is faid of Ierusalem, they went up to Ierusalem, and downe to Egypt, and other places: So the Church is from above, The way of wisedome is on high. Religion is upward, Grace, Glory, and Comfort come from above, and draw our minds up to have our conversation and our de-	3• Gal 4.26. Prov.15.24•
Iterafalem was the joy of the whole earth: fo the V 2 Church	. 4

BR.XII.

Pfal.48.3. 5. Heb.12-23.

1 Pet, 1. 20, 1 Pet. 2. 2.

objerv.

stat we are
Daybeers of
Ierufalem.
Gal.4.16.

Pfal.137.5;6.

Church of God, what were the world without it, but a company of incarnate Devils.

In Ierafalem Records were kept of the names of all the Crizens there; fo all the true Citizens of the Church, their names are written in the booke of life in Heaven.

The Daughters of Ierusalem therefore are the true members of the Church that are both bred and fed in the Church. Let us take a tryall of our solves, whether we be Daughters of Ierusalem or nos. That we may make this tryall of our selves.

1. If we find freedome in our conscience from terrours and feares. If we find spiritual liberty and freedome to serve God, it is a signethat we are Daughters of Ierusalem, because Ierusalem was free.

2. Or if we mind things above, and things of the Church: If we take to heart the cause of the truth, it is a signe we are true Daughters of Ierusalem. We know what the Psalmits saith, Let my right hand forget her conning, if I forget thee O Ierusalem, if I doe not prefer terusalem before my thieft joy. If the cause of the Church goe to our hearts, if we can joy in the Churches joy, and monthe in the Churches abasement and suffering, it is a signe we are true Daughters of Ierusalem, and lively members of the body of Christ. Otherwise, when we heare that the Church goes downe, and that the adverse part prevailes, and we joy, it is a signe we are daughters of Bubylen and not of Ierusalem.

Therefore let us aske our affections what we

I charge you o Dangbors ; &c.

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are, as Juffin writes excellently in his booke SER XII. de Civitate Dei, aske thy heart of what City thou art.

But what faith the Church to the Dangbiers of Ierusalem in the first place.

2018.

I charge you.

It is a kind of admiration supplied thus, I charge you as you love me your Sifter, as you love Christas you tender my case that am thus used, as you will make it good that you are Danghters of Terufalem, and not of Babylon, tell my Beloved that I am ficke of Love. It is a strong charge, a defective speech, which yeelds us this observation.

Objero,

That true Affections are ferious in the things of God and of Religion.

She layes a weight upon them, I charge you o Danghters of lerufalem. True impressions have Arong expressions; therefore are we cold in matters of Religion in our discourses, it is because we want thefe inward imprefions. The Church here was full, the could not containe her felfe in regard of the largenesse of her affections. I change you O Daughters of Ternsalem, &c.

A figue of un-beliefe and coldne fe.

5 2 5 5 M

We may find the truth of Grace in the heart by the discoveries and expressions in the converfation in generall.

I charge you, O Daughters of Ierufalem, if you find my Beloved shat ye tell bim I am ficke of Love.

The Church here speaks to others meaner ther her felfe, the thould have the Church tell Christ (by Prayer, the furest intelligencer) how

SER.XII.

Quest. ANW.

the was used how the languished, and was ficke for him, and cannot be without him.

Why did not the Church tell Christ ber felte?

So the did as well as the could, but the defined the help of the Church this way alfo. Somtimes it is fo with the Children of God, that they cannot pray fo well as they should, and as they would doe, because the waters of the souleure for troubled, that they can doe nothing but utter groanes and fighes, especially in a flate of defertion, as Hezekiah could butchatter, and Males could not uttera word at the red Sea. though he did frive in his fpirita in fuch cafes they must be

beholding to the help of others.

Iam. 5.14.

Mar. 2, 2, 3.

Sometimes a man is in body ficke (as James faith) If any man be ficke let him foud for the EL ders, and let them pray. There may be fuch diftemper of body and foule, that we are unfit to lay open our estate to our owae content. It is oft fo with the best of Gods Children; not that God doth not respect those broken sighes and defires but they give not content to the foule. The poore palife-man in the Gospell not able to goe himfelfe was carried on the floulders of others. and let through the house to Christofrimes we may be in fuch a palife chare, that we cannot bring our felves to Christ; but the must be content to be borneto him by others.

Tcharge you o Dangharre of Jerufalow, that we tell my Beloved I am ficke of Leave riorund on

Whencethe point that define you would ob-It (by Prayer the fired incelling allowed yd)

That

Icharge you O Daughters Bie!

That at such times as we find not our spirits inter- Sun.X ged from any cause outward and inward to comfort and joy, then is a time to defire the prayers and help of others.

It is good to have a flockegoing every where, and those thrive the best that have most prayers made for them, have a stocke going in every. countrey this is the happineffe of the Saints. To inforce this infruction, to defire the prayers of others, we must discover, that there is a wondrous force in the prayers of Christians one for another. It is more then a complement, would

it were thought fo.

The great Apostle Paul, see how he defires the Romanes, that they would ftrive and contend with God after a holy violence, by their joynt prayers for him; fo he defires the Thefalonians that they would pray for him, That he might be delivered from unreasonable men. It is usuall with him to fay, Pray, pray, and for us too, for fuch are gracious in the Court of Heaven. Despise none in this case, a true downe right experienced Christians prayers are of much esteeme with God. Our bleffed Saviour himfelfe, when he was to goe into the Garden, though his poore Difeiples were fleepy, and very untoward, yet he would have their fociety and prayers. 1011

I sharge you o Daughters of Ierufalem of you find my Beloved that ye tell him I am fick of Love.

To speake a little of the matter of the charge, I am ficke of Love, I love kim, because I have found former comfort, strength, and sweetnesse from Objeru.

Rom. 15.20.

2 Thef. 3.2.

Mat, 16,

SER.XM.

from him, that I cannot be without him. To be Love-ficke then in the presence of the Church, is to have strong affections to Christ, from which comes wondrous disquietnesse of spirit in his absence, here is somewhat good, and somewhat ill. This is first her vertue, that she did fervently love, this was her infirmity, that she was so much distempered with her present want: These two breeds this sicknesse of love, whence we observe,

Where the thing loved is not present answerable to the desires of the soule that loves, there followes disquiet and distemper of affections; That is here ter-

med lickneffe of Love.

The Reason hercof is, Natural contentment is in union with the thing Loved. The more excellent the thing is that is loved, the more contentment there is in communion with it, and where it is in any degree or measure hindred, there is disquiet : answerable to the contentment in enjoying, is the griefe, forrow, and fickneffe in parting. The happinesse of the Church consisting in fociety with Christstherefore it is her mifery and ficknesse to be deprived of him, not to enjoy him whom her foule fo dearly loveth. There are few in the world ficke of this discase, I would there were more ficke of the love of Christ there are many that furfer rather of fulneffe, who thinke we have too much of this Manna; of this preaching, of this Gospell, there is too much of this knowledge of the ordinances thele are not ficke ound former comfort, flivereth, and fi-avol to Make

Jam ficke of Love!

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Make a Usetherefore of Tryall, whether we SER.XII. be in the state of the Church or no, by valuing and prizing the presence of Christin bus Ordinances, the Word and Sacraments.

VIE.

There are many fond ficknesses in the world. there is Ammons ficknesse, that was sieke of love for his fifter Thamar, his countenance discovered it, and Abab he is ficke in defiring his Neighbours vineyard: You have many strange sicknesfes, many ficke with fires kindled from the flesh, from Hell, but few ficke of this ficknesse here spoken of.

a Sam. 13.2.

1 Kin. 12.4.

If we find our felves carried to Christ, to run in that ftream as ftrong as the affections of those that are diftempered with ficknesse of the love of other things, it will discover to us whether we be truly Love ficke or not.

Take a man that is ficke for any earthly thing. whether of Ababs or Ammons sicknesse, or of any thing, take it as you will, That which the foule is ficke of in love it thinks of daily, it dreames of it in the night. What doe our foules therefore thinke of what doe our meditations run after When we are in our advised and best thoughts, what doe we most thinke of e if of Christsofthe state of the Church here, of Grace and Glory all is well, what makes us in the midft of all worldly, discontentments to thinke all dung and drosse in comparison of Christ; but this sicknesse of love to Christ, if our love be in such a degree, as it makes us ficke of it, it makes us not to heare what

we heare, not to fee what we fee, not to regard

San. XII.

what is present the soule is in a kind of extase, it is carried so strongly, and taken up with things of Heaven; it is deaded to other things, when our eyes are no more led with vanity then if we had none, and the sies is so mortified, as if we were dead men, by reason of the strength of our affections that run another way to better things which are above.

3.

Thus we fee it is in Love : Talke with a man that is in any heate of affections, you talke with one that is not at home, you talke with one abfent, The foule is more where it loves, then where it dwels. Surely where love is in any strength, it drawes up the foule, fo that a man oft times in his calling and ordinary imployments doth not heed them, but paffeth through the world, as a man at randome, he regards not the things of the world for Christ is gotten into his heart, and drawes all the affections to himfelfe. Where the affection of love is strong, it cares not what it fuffers for the party loved, nay it glories in it. As it is faid of the Difciples, when they were whipped and scourged for preaching the Gospell, it was a marrer of Glory to them: It is not labour, but favour; it is not labour and vexation, but favour that is taken where love is to the party loved, where the love of Christ is (which was here in the Church' labour is no labour, fuffering is no fuffering trouble is no trouble.

Ad. 5.41.

Againe is is the property of the party that is ficke of this difease to take listle consentment in other

things. Tell a covetous worldling that is in love

with

Heb. ra.c.

with the world a discourse of learning, what cares hee for learning; tell him of a good bargaine, of a matter of gaine, and he will hearken to that. So it is with the soulethat hath felt the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart, tell him of the world (especially if he want that which he desires, the peace and strength that he found from Christ in former times) he relisheth

not your discourse.

Labour wee therefore every day more and more, to have larger and larger affections to Christ. The soule that loves Christ, the nearer to Christ, the more joyfull it is, when he thinks of those mutuall embracings, when Christ and his soule shall meet together; this happinesse is there where the soule enjoyes the thing loved, but that is not here, but in Heaven; therefore in the meane time with joy he thankfully frequents the places where Christ is present in the Word and Sacrament, and that we may come to have this affection.

Let us fee what our soules are without him, meere dungeons of darknesse and confusion, nothing comming from us that is good, this will breed love to the Ordinances, and then we shall relish Christ, both in the Word and Successifier he is food for the hungry soule, and requires nothing of us but good appetites; and this will make us define his love and presence.

till it fland at the *Worlb*, so the soule once inflated **AKE**with an heavenly fire, and acquainted with the first first original cannot be at rest untill it find it

teile

San XIII



The thirteenth Sermon.

CANT. V. VIII.IX.

Lebargeyou O Daughters of Ierusalem if ye find my Beloved that ye tell him I am siske of Love. What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou fairest among nomen, &cc.

意愿

He foule as it is of an immortall fubstance, so in the right and true temper thereof, aspireth towards immortality, unless when it is clouded and overpress with that

which present downer and send the since which hangeib so fast on (as the Apostle speaks) which is
the reason of those many and divers rossings and
rurmovings of the enlightened soule, now up,
now downe, now running amaine homewards,
and now againe slaggish, little and state, untill
rowsed up by extraordinary meanes it puts on
againe; as the fire mounteth upwards unto its
proper place; and as the needle still trembleth
till it stand at the North, so the soule once instawied with an heavenly fire, and acquainted with
her first original cannot be at rest untill it find it
felse

Simile.

felfe in that comfortable way which certainly San XIII. leads homewards.

An inflance whereof we have in the Church here, who having loft her fweet communion with Christ, and so paid dearly for her former neglect and fleighting his kind invitations (as being troubled reftleffe in mind, beaten and wounded by the watchmen, bereft of her vaile, &c.) Yes this heavenly fire of the bleffed Spirit, this water of life fo reftlefly springing in her, makes her ficknesse of love and ardent defire after Christ to be fuch, that the cannot contains her felfe, but breaks forth into this passionate charge and ro queft.

Ioh 4.

I charge you o Daughters of Ierufalem, if ye find my Beloved that ye tell him I am ficke of Love.

Thus we may fee that the way to Heaven is full of changes, the firength of correption overclouds many times and damps our joyes. How many feverall tempers haththe Church bin in ! Sometimes the is all compounded of joy, vehemently defiring kiffes of her best beloved, flie holds her beloved fast, and will not let himgoe, and fometimes againe the is gone, hath loft her beloved, is in a fea of troubles, feeks and cannot find him, becomes fluggish, negligent, overtaken with felfe-love, after which when the hath finarted for her omiffions (as here againe) the is all affre after Christ(as we fay) no ground will hold her, a way hie Hiesafter him, and is reftleffe untill the find bins. Where by the way we fee, That periodients and flability it for chelife to comechere

SER.XIII

2 Cor. 4 17.

Rom. 8.18.

our portion is to expect changes, stormes and tempests; therefore they must not be strange to particular persons, since it is the portion of the whole Church, which thus by sufferings and conformity to the head must enter into glory, whiles God makes his power persect in our weaknesse, overcomes Satan by unlikely means, and so gets himselfe the glory, even out of our greatest infirmities, temptations, and abasements.

But God though he make all things worke for good unto his children, even the Devill, fin and death, defertions, afflictions and all; yet we must be warned hereby not to tempt God, by neglecting the meanes appointed for our comfortable passage; but open to Christ when he knocks, imbrace him joyfully in his ordinances, and let our hearts fly open unto him: For though (through his Mercy) our wounds be cured; yet who would be wounded to try such dangerous experiments, as here befell the Church in her desertions, for her sluggish negligence, deadnesse, and selfe-love.

So that we fee there is nothing gotten by favouring our felves in carnall liberty, fecurity, or by yeelding to the flesh. The Church stood upon tearmes with Christ when he would have come in to her, but what ensued hereupon? she fell into a grievous desertion, and not only so, but finds very hard usage abroad, all which she might have prevented by watchfulnesse, carefulnesse and opening to Christs knocking. It is a spiritu-

all

all errour to which we are all prone, to thinke Sax. XIII. that much is gained by favouring our felves, but we shall find it otherwise. See here againe that God will beare with nothing though in his owne; but he will sharply punish them even for omissions, and that not only with desertion, but fomtimes they shall meet with oppositions in the world.

I Sam I.

Amos 3.2.

David cannot escape with a proud thought in numbring of the people, but he must smart for it and his people alfo. God is wondrous carefull of his Children to correct them, when he lets frangers alone. It is a figne of love when he is at this coft with us. And it should tie us to be carefull of our behaviour, not to presume upon Gods indulgence; for the nearer we are to him, the more carefull he is overus, he will be fanttified in all that come neare him. We see the Corinthians, because they came unreverently to the Lords Table (though otherwise they were holy men, some of them are ficke, some weake, others sleep, that they might not be condemned with the world.

Levit 10 2

1 Cor. 11.

Let none therefore think the profession of Religion to imply an immunity, but rather a fraiter bond; for Indgement begins at the house of God, whatfoever he fuffers abroad, he will not fuffer disorders in his own house, as the Prophet sayes, You only have I knowne of all the families of the earth, therefore you shall not goe unpunished. The Church is neare him, his Spoule whom he loveth, and therefore he will correct her nor enduring any abatement, or decay of the first love in

Sen. X Rev. 2. her. And for this very cause he threateneth the Church of Ephesus, to remove her candlesticke.

To proceed, the poore Church here is not discouraged, but discovers and empties her selfe to the daughters of Ierusalem, as it is the nature of Culinary fire not onely to mount upwards, but alfo to bewray it selfe by light and heate : so of this heavenly fire when it is once kindled from above, not onely to aspire in its motion, but to discover it selfe in affecting others with its qualities, it could not containe it felfe here in the Church, but that the must goe to the daughters of Ierusalem, I charge you o daughters of Ierusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him I am ficke of love. Therefore they may doubt that they have not this heavenly fire kindled in them, that expresse it not seriously, for of all affections it will not be concealed. David wonders at his owne love, o how I love thy Law, oh how amiable arethy Tabernaeles!

Simile.

Pfal 119.

A Love-sicke foule stands not upon tearmes.

1 The(2.3.

Againe we see here, That where the sonle is sicke of love, it stands not upon any tearmes, but it humbleth and abaseth it selfe. We say that affection stands not with Majesty, therefore Christs love to us, moved him to abase himselfe intaking our nature that he might be one with us, love stood not upon tearmes of greatnesse; Wee see the Church goes to those that were meaner proficients in Religion then her selfe, to powre out her Spirit to them, to the daughters of sernsalem, she abaseth her selfe to any service, love endureth all things, any thing to attaine to the thing loved;

as we fee Hamor the foane of Sichem, he would endure painfull circumcifion for the love hee bore to Dinah. So Ads 5. 41. it is faid they went away rejoycing after they were whipped, because they loved Christ. The spirit of love made them rejoyce when they were most difgracefully used.

Sometimes where this affection of heavenly love is prevalent, fo that a man is ficke of it, the diftempers thereof redounds to the body and re-Acces upon that, as we fee in David, Pfal. 22.4. That his moy flure became as the drought of fummer: because there is a marriage and a sympathic between the foule and the body, wherein the excessive affections of the one redound and reflect upon the other.

Tell him that I am licke of love, here is a fickneffe, but not unto death, but unto life, a fickneffe that never ends but in comfort and farisfaction, bleffed are those that hunger and thirst after Christ, they shall be satisfied, as we shall see afterwards

more at large.

Knowledge gives not the denomination, for me may know ill and be good, and we may know good and be eville but it is the affection of the foule, which cleaves to the things known, the truth of our love is that gives the denomination of a flate to be good or ill; love is the weight and wing of the Toule, which carries it where it goes, which if it carry us to earth we are bale and earthly, if to heaven, heavenly; we should have especiall care how we fixe this affection, for thereafter as it is,

SER XIII Gen. 34.24. A& 6.

That this fich. neffe of diving love works alfo upon the body. Pfal. 3 2.3.

It is not our. knowledge that makes m good or evill, but goodne fe loved and cleaved to makes m to be fo.

even

Sar.XIII.

even so is our condition, Askethy love of what city thou art, whether of terusalem or of Babylon (as Austin saith) Now the daughters of Ierusalem replyunto the Church wondring at her earnestnesse.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou fairest among women, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved that thou dost so charge us?

In stead of giving satisfaction to her, they reply with asking new Questions, What us thy Beloved more then another Beloved, 0 thou fairest among women? what is thy Beloved, &cc. Wherein ye have a doubling of the Question, to shew the seriousnesses of it; of this their answer there are two parts.

i. A loving and sweet Compellation, O thou fai-

reft among women.

2. The Question doubled, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved And againe, What is thy Beloved, &cc, that thou dost so charge us, as if they should say, Thou layest a serious charge upon us, therefore there is some great matter surely in thy Beloved, that thou makest such enquiry after him. Thus the weaker Christians being stirred up by the example of the stronger, they make this Question, and are thus inquisitive; but to speake of them in their order.

O thou fairest among women, here is the compellation, the Church is the fairest among women in the judgement of Christ, so he cals her, Cant. t. 8. O thou fairest among women; and here the fellow members of the Churchtearme her so too, faire and the fairest incomparably faire.

But

O thou fairest among women, &c.

But how commeth she to be thus faire?

It is in regard that she is cleathed with Christs robes, Rev. 12, there is a woman mentioned, cloathed with the Sunne: We were all innobled with the image of God at the first; but after we had finned, we were bereft of that Image; therefore now all our beauty must be cloathing, which is not naturall to man but artificiall, setched from other things, our beauty now is borrowed, it is not connatural with us, the beauty of the Church now comes from the head of the Church Christ, she shines in the beames of her husband; not onely in Iustification, but in Sanctification also.

The Church is lovely and faire againe, as from Christs imputative righteousnesses, so from his righteousnesses in the inherent in her, the graces she hath from him; for of him we receive Grace for Grace, there is never a Grace but it is beautifull and faire; for what is Grace but the beames of Christ the Son of Righteousnesses, so that all must be faire that comes from the first faire, all beautifull that comes from the first beauty.

This beauty of Grace, whereby it makes the Church so faire springs from these grounds.

First, In that it is from a devine principle and originall, it is not basely bred, but from Heaven, and therefore it raiseth the soule above nature, and makes the subjects wherein it is as farre surpasse all other men as men doe beasts.

Secondly, In regard of the continuance, it is everlatting and makes us continue for ever.

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Que st Answ.

The Church is faire in regard she is cloathed with Christ.

In regard of the graces she bath from Christ she shines.

2.

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1 Pet 1.14.

flesh is grasse, and as the flower of grasse (saith the Prophet) and it is repeated in the New Testament in divers places. All worldly excellency is as the flower of grasse, The grasse withereth and the flower fadeth but the word of the Lord that is, the grace that is imprinted in the soule by the Spirit with the Word) that abideth for ever, and makes usabide likewise.

Use.

From this fairenesse of the Church, let us take occasion to contemplate of the excellency of Christ that puts this lustre of beauty upon the Church. Moses married a woman that was not beautifull, but could not alter the complection and condition of his Spouse. But Christ doth, he takes us wallowing in our bloud, deformed and defiled, here is such a husband as can put his Church into his own disposition, and transforme her into his owne proportion. He is such a Head as can quicken his members, such a root as instills life into all his branches; such a foundation as makes us living stones, there is a vertue and power in this husband above all.

That Christ he the most exceltent bushand.

Obiett.

I. Zambat regard the Charch cals ber felfe blacke. But the is blacke?

She is so indeed, and she confesseth her selfe to be so, Cam. 1.5. I am black but comely, blacke in regard of the afflictions and persecutions of others she meets with in this world.

Blacke againe, In regard of feandals, for the Devill hates the Church more then all focieties in the world; therefore in the fociety of the Church shere are often more feandals then in other people, as the Apostle tels the Grint hians,

there

there was incest among them, the like was not | San XIII among the heathen.

She is black through the envy of the world, that looks more at the Churches faults then vertues.

The Church is blacke and unlovely, nothing differing from others. In regard of Gods outward dealing, All fals alike to all, they are ficke and deformed, they have all things outwardly whatfoever is common with others.

Lattly and principally the is blacke, In reflect of her infirmities and weaknesses, subject to weaknesse and passions as other men; the beauty of the Church is inward and undiscerned to the carnall eve altogether : the Scribes and Pharifees fee no vertue in Christ himselfe. It is said, that be came among his owne, and his owne could not discerne of him; the darknesse could not comprehend that light. Now as it was with Christ, so it is much more with the Church, let this then be the use of it.

Opposethis state of the Church to the falle judgement of the world: they fee all blacke, and nothing elle that is good; Christ sees that which is black too; but then his Spirit in them (together with the fight of their blacknesse) seeth their beauty too. I am blacke bus comely, &c. Be not discouraged therefore at the censure of the world, blind men cannot judge of colours. It is faid of Christ, he had no forme or beauty in him when we (hall fee him. 1. Not in outward glory, nor in the view of the world. If wee be therefore thought to bee blacke, we are no otherwise thought of then the

I Cor. s. How the Churches state in this life comes to be fo will of (candals.

Eccl.g.z. 5.

Ioh. 1, 11.

Ulaz. Oppose Indgement to Indee ment.

Use 3.
To remember christs judgement of the church when we are un kr temptation.

San.XIII. the Church and Christ hath been before us.

Againe, Let us make this Use of it, against Satan in the time of temptation, doth Christ thinke us faire for the good we have ? doth he not altogether value us by our ill and shall we beleeve Satan, who joynes with the diftempers of melancholy or weaknesse we are in, which he useth as a weapon against the soule, to make us thinke otherwise, Satan is not only a murtherer, but alyar from the beginning. We must not believe an enemy, and a lyar withall, But confider how Christ and the Church judgeth, that have better difcerning. And let us beware we be not Saturs to our felves: For if there were no Devill, vet in the time of temptation and defertion we are subject to discouragement, to give falle wienesse against our felves, we are apr to looke on the darke fide of the Cloud. The Cloud that went before the I/raelites had a double aspect, one darke, the other light; In temptation we looke on the darke fide of the foule, and are witty in pleading against our selves. Q but confider what Christ judgeth of us, o then fairest among women, and what those about us that are learned, who can read our evidences betterthen we our felves, doe judge of us, let us trust the judgement of others in time of temptation more thenour owne.

Exod. 14.10.

Simile.

The 5.
To fee the bitsernese of their
spirits that an
or will see no
good in Gods
Childen.
Simile.

Learne againe here, What to judge of the spirits of such kind of men, as are all in disgracing and defacing the poore Church, their table talke is of the infirmities of Christians, they light upon them as slies doe upon fore places, and will see nothing

that

that is good in them. O where is the Spirit of SER.XIII. Chrift, or of the Church of Christ in them that thus beferatch the face of the Churchewhen vet (oft times) their bearts tell them thefe poore defpifed ones will be better then themselves one day; for grace shall have the upper hand of all excellencies.

The Church is faire and faireft, Grace is a transcendent good, all the excellency of civility and morality is nothing to this, this denominates the Church the faireft, the is not guilt, but pure gold; not painted, but hath a true naturall complection, all other excellencies are but guilt. painted excellencies. The whore of Babylon the is wondrous faire. But wherein doth her beauty confift . In ornaments and ceremonies to abuse filly people, that goe no further then fancy, it is an excellency that comes not to the judgement, but the excellency of the Church is otherwife, the is The fairest among women, the hath a naturall fairenesse; asgold is pure gold, so the Church is of a pure composition, glorious within. It is for the falle whorish Church to be glorious without only, but the true Church is glorious within: But that which we should especially observe, is, That we should labour to answer this commendation, not onely to be faire, but the fairest, to be transcendently fingularly good, to doe fomewhat more then others can, to have somewhat more in us then others have.

For it is answerable to the state of a Christian, is a Christian in an excellent ranke above other

That all other excellencies. fave grace are but painted excellencies.

200001-0191202

Objero.

That this Brife for eminency i grace is futable to a Christians calling.

men ?

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men ? let him shew it by a carriage more gracious, more fruitfull and plentifull in good works. There is a kind of excellency affected in other things, much more should we defire to be excellent in that which is good, that we may not be faire only but the fairest. This the Apostle Saint Paul excellently presseth to Titus his Scholler, Tit. 2.14. and to all of us in other places, that we should be, A peculiar people zealous of good works; not onely to doethem, but to be zealous of them, and to goe before others in them, flanding as stander-bearers. Therefore those that think they may goe too farre in Religion, that they may be too fruitfull, are not worthy the name of the Spoule of Christ, for the is faire, yeathe fairest among women: The righteous is more excellent then his neighbour; therefore we should excell in good works (asthe Apostle exhorts us) to labour after things that are excellent; as if he should fay, Is there any thing better then other, labour for that. You have some so far from this disposition, that they cry downe the excellencies of others, leaft the fairenesse of others might discover their blackneffe. Thus we leave the Compellation and come to the Question.

That it is a finfull stuggish feare to feare to be religious.

1 Cor 12.32. 2 Pet.1.8.

Quest.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved? and they double it, What is thy Beloved more then

anosher Beloved, that thou fo chargeft us?

Questions are of divers natures, we shall not stand upon them, this is not a Question meerely of ignorance (for they had some knowledge of Christ, though weake) Nor was it a curious nor a catching

catching Question, like those of the Scribes and Pharifees unto Christ, to instance in that of Pilat, What is truth ? when Christ had told him the truth, What is truth (faith he) in a scorpfull prophane manner, as indeed prophane spirits cannot heare favoury words, but they turne them off with scorne, what is truth? This here in the Text is not fuch, but a Question tending to further refolution and fatisfaction, What is the Beloved more then another Beloved?

First of all observe. That these of the Church here were stirred up by the examples of other members of the Church to be inquifitive after Christ, so to be farisfied. Hence observe. That there is a wondrous force in the examples of Christians to firre up one another. We see here when the Church was ficke of love, the other part of the members began to thinke what is the reason the Church is so earnest to seeke after Christ, there is some excellency fure in him; for, wife men doe notusegreat motions in little matters, great things are carried with great movings; we use not to stirre up tragedies for trifles, to make mountaines of mole hils, the endeavours and carriages of great persons that be wise, judicious and holy, are anfwerable to the nature of things. And indeed the Church judgeth aright in this; then fee the force of good example, any man that hath his wits about him, when he fees other ferious, earnest and carefull about a thing whereof for the present he can see no reason (especially if they have parts equall or superiour to himselfe) will What

reason thus presently.

SBR.XIII. Ich.18. 18.

Obfere.

Sen. XIII. A rea/oning upon otbers earneftreffe.

Use. To be exempla ry for good to

A debt to those that are with-

ble to the good we foall doe to orbers, Shall be our comfort in life and death.

That wee Shall for our know ledge, but al'o for all the good examples and belgs me bave bad and negtelled.

What is the matter that fuch an one is fo earnest, fo carefull, watchfull, laborious, inquifitive? Is it not for want of wit ? farely he hath parts enough, he underfrands bemfelfe well. And then he begins to think, fure I am too cold, hereupon comes competition and corrivalitie farely I will be as good as he.

Let us labour therefore to be exemplary to others, and to expresse the graces of God; for thus we shall doe more then we are aware, there is a fecret influence in good example, though a man fay nothing (faith one) there is a way to profit from a good man though hee hold his peace, his course of life speaks loud enough, we owe this to all, even to them that are without, to doe them fo much good as to give them a good example, and we wrong them when we doe not, and hinder their comming on by an evill, or a dead example.

That enfwera. Let this be one motive to ftirre us up to it. That answerable to the good we should doe in this kind, shall be our comfort inlife and death, and our reward after desth. For the more foreading our good is, either in word, life, or conversation, the more our consciences shall be setled in the consideration of a good life well foent, our reward shall be answerable to our communication and diffusion of not only answer good and whereas otherwise it will lie heavy on the conscience, not onely in this life, but at the day of judgement and after, when we shall think not only of the personal ill that we stand guilty of, but exemplary ill alfo.

It should move those ther fore of inferiour fort to look

to all good examples, as the Church here to the San. XIII. love of the other part of the Church. Wherfore are examples among us, but that we should follow them ? we shall not onely be answerable for abuse of knowledge, but also of good examples we have had and neglected. Dorh God kindle lights for us, and shall not we walke by their light? It is a fin not to confider the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Heavens, and works of Nature and Providence, much more not to confider the Works of Grace. But one place of Scripture shall close up all, which is, Rom. 11.11. That the example of us Gentiles at length shall stirre up and provoke the Jewes to beleeve. To those stiffe-necked Jewes example shall be so forcible, that it shall prevaile with them to beleeve and to be converted. If example be of such force as to convent the Jewes that are fo far off, how much more is it or should it be to convert Christians, wondrous is the force of good example. So we come to the Question ic felfe.

What is thy Beloved more when another Beloved, &c.

We see there is excellent use of holy conference, the Church comming to the daughters of Jerufalem, Speaking of Christ her Beloved, that the is ficke of Love, &c. The daughters of Ierufatem are inquifitive to know Christ more and more. Here is the benefit of holy conference and good fpeeches, one thing drawes on another, and that drawes on another, till at length the foule be warmed and kindled with the confideration and

Simile.

and speaking of beaventy things alittle ibing is the beginning of preat matters.

meditation of heavenly things. That that is little That in dealing in the beginning may bring forth great matters. This Question to the Church, and talking with her, I charge you if you find my Beloved, to tell him that I am ficke of Love, breeds Queftions in others. What is thy Beloved, &c. Whence upon the defcription of her Beloved, her heart is kindled, the finderh her Beloved, fo that talking of holy and heavenly things is good for others, and our felves alfo. It is good for others, as it was good for the daughters of Ierusalem here, for therupon they are ftirred up to be inquifitive after Chrift, and it was good for the Church her felfe; for hereupon the tooke occasion to make a large commendation of Christ, wherein she found much comfort.

That boly conference is good for others and our fetves.

2 Kin. s.

Phil.1.

Exbertation to fraitfull conerence:

Good conference then is good for our felves; for we fee a little feed brings forth at length a great tree, a little fire kindleth much fewell, and great things many times rife out of small definited beginnings. It was a little occasion which Na-aman the Affrican had to effect his conversion. There was a poore banished woman, a stranger. who was a lewish maid-fervant, the told her Lords fervants that there was a Prophet in Jury that could heale him : whereupon he came thither, and was converted and healed. And Paul theweth, that the very report of his bonds did a great deale of good in Cafars house. Report and fame is a little matter, but little matters make way for the greater.

This may put us in mind to fpendour time fruit-

That graces fuiting the communion of Saints is a preat belp to conference.

fully in good conference, whenin a feretionit is feafo- San. XIII. nable : we know not when we begin, where we may make an end ? our foules may be carried up to Heave before we are aware; for the Spirit will inlarge it felfe from one thing to another. To him Mar. 22. that hath shall be given more and mere still God graciously seconds good beginnings. We see the poore Disciples, when they were in a damp for the loffe of Christ, after he comes, meets them, and talks of holy things. In that very conference, their hearts were warmed and kindled: For, next to Luk.24.3a. Heaven it felfe our meeting rogether here, it is a kind of Paradice, the greatest pleasure in the world is to meet with those here, whom we shall ever live with in Heave. Those who are good should not spend such opportunities fruitlefly.

And to this end, labour for the graces of the Communion of Saints; for there Is fuch a state, we beleeve it as an Article of our Creed, How shall we approve our felves to be fisch as have interest noto the communion of Saints, unlesse we have fpirits able to communicate good to others? pitrifull and loving spirits that we may speake a

word in due feafon.

What a world of precious time is spent in idle conversing, as if the time were a burthen, and no improvement to be made of the good parts of others : fometimes though we know that which weaske of others as well as they doe ; yet notwithstanding good speeches will draw us to know it better, by giving occasion to speak more

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of it, wherewith the Spirit works more effectually and imprints it deeper: So that it shall be a more rooted knowledge then before. For that doth good that is graciously knowne, and that is graciously knowne that the Spirit seales upon our soules. Perhaps the knowledge I have is not yet sealed sufficiently, it is not rooted by conference, though I heare the same things againe, yet I may heare them in a fresh manner, and so I may have it sealed deeper then before, experience finds these things to be true.

That Christians Should be in . quistive.

Againe, We should labour here to have our bearts in anisitive. The heathen man accounted it a grace in his scholler, and a figne that he would prove hopefull, because be was full of Questions. Christians should be inquisitive of the wayes of Righte. ou welle; Inquisitive of the right path which leads to Heaven, how to carry themselves in private in their families, how in all estates, Inquisitive of the excellency of Christ: What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved ? Queftions endufually in resolutions; for the soule will not rest but in fatisfaction. Rest is the happinesse of the soule as it were, when a Question is moved it will not be quiet till it have fatisfaction; therefore doubting at the first, breeds resolution at the last. It is good therefore to raile Questions of the practise of all necessary points, and to improve the good parts and gifts of others that we converse with, to give fatisfaction. What an excellent improvement is this of communion and Company, when nothing troubles our spirit, but we may have fatisfaction

faction from others upon our proposing it. Per- Sar. XIV. haps God bath laid up in the parts of others farisfaction to our foules, and hath fo determined that we shall be perplexed and vexed with scruples, til we have recourfe to some whom he hath appointed to be helpfull to us in this kind. Many goe mourning a great part of their daies in a kind of fullennesse this way, because that they do not open their estate to others. You see here the contrary practife of the Church, the doubles the Question, What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou fairest among women, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, that thou doeft fo charge us ?

The fourteenth Sermon.

CANT. V. IX. X.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou fairest among women, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, that thou dost fo charge us ?

My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefelt among ten thousand.



He last time we met, we left the Church ficke of Love: which strange effection in her together with her passionare charge

San. XIV, to the daughters of Ierufalem, moved them to make this Question unto her, What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, &c. To be in love is much; to conceale it is grievous; to vent it with fuch fervency and passion breeds astonishment in these younger Christians, who wonder what that is which can fo draw away the Churches love, and run away with her affections. They knew no fuch excellencies of the person the Church so admired, and therefore they double the Question unto her, What is thy Beloved, &c. what is thy Beloved, &c. Whereby we see the excellency of the foule which afpires still towards perfection, not refting in any state inferiour to the most excellent. Therefore also is the Churches ficknesse of love here, who desires a nearer union and communion with Christ then she at this time had

For there are degrees of spirituall languithing, till we be in Heaven we are alway under some degree of this ficknesse of love; though the foule have more communion at one time then at another. Yearhe Angels are under this wish, to see Christ together with his Church in full perfe-Ction, forhar untill we be in Heaven, where shall be a perfect re-union of foule and body, and of all the members of the Church together, there is a kind of ficknesse attending upon the Church,

and a languishing.

The Question asked is,

What is thy Beloved more then anothers Beloved, o the fairest among women?

What !

What ! now faire when her vaile was taken San XIV away! now faire when the Watehmen abased her; now faire when she was disgraced ? Yes, now faire and now faire, in the fight of the daughters of Ierufalem, and in the fight of Christ that cals her the fairest among women: So that under all difgraces, infirmities and scandals, under all the shame that rifeth in the foule upon fin, under all thefe clouds there is an excellency of the Church, the is, The fairest among women, notwithstanding all thefe: O thou fairest among women.

Whence comes this faireneffe under fuch feeming

foulenesse and disgrace?

It comes from without, it is borrowed beauty, as you have it, Ezek. 16.1,2. By nature we lie in our bloud, there must be a beauty put upon us, we are faire with the beauty that we have out of Christs wardrope. The Church shines in the beames of Christs Righteousnesse, shee is not borne thus faire, but new borne fairer. The Church of Christ is all-glorious, butit is within, not feen of the world, the hath a life, but it is a hidden life, our glory and our life is hidden in Christ: It is hid sometimes from the Church it felfe, who fees onely her deformity and not her beauty; her death, but not her life, because her life ished. Here is a mystery of Religion, The Church is never more faire then when the judgest ber felfe to be most deformed; Never more happy then when she judgeth her felfe to be miferable, Never more strong then when she feeles her felfe to be weake ; Never more righteoms then when the focles her felfe to be

Anfw.

That Grace onely makes a lovely to Christ. Pfal 45. Col. 3.

That theChurch faire in Chrift's eye then when be fees of come. platner most of ber deformities. 2 Cor. 12.

most

Sun.XIV.
That the fenfe
of one contrary
forceth another.
2 Cor. 12.16.

most burthened with the guitt of her owne finnes, because the sence of one contrary forceth to another; the sence of ill forceth us to the fountaine of good, to have supply thence: When I am weake then am I strong (saith Paul) Grace and strength is perfect in weaknesse.

What to judge of the Church and Gods people under feeming diffraces. This should teach us what to judge of the Church and people of God, even under their seeming disgraces, yet to judge of them as the excellentest people in the world, Pfal. 16. All my delight is in these that are excellent, to jayne our selves to them; Especially this is here to be understood of the Church as it is the mysticall body of Christ, not as a mixed body, as a visible Church, but as it is the Temple of the Holy-Ghost.

Heb. 12 22.

The visible Church hathtearmes of excellency pur upon it sometimes, but it is in regard of the better part. As gold unrefined is called gold, because gold is the better part: And a heap of wheat unwinnowed is called wheat, though there be much chasse in it, the body of Christ it self hath alwayes excellent tearmes given it, o then fairest among women.

Simile.

Those that looke upon the Church with the speciacles of malice can see no such beauty in her, thoughto espy our faults, as the Devill could in sob, to quarrell, to slander, they are quicksighted enough; but we see here the Church in the judgement of the daughters of servialem, that she is the fairest among women.

That the cause why wicked men see not this beauty, is because they looke on Gods through the spellacies of malice.

The Papifts have a painted beauty for their

Ca

Catholique Church, but here is no fuch beauty. SER.XIV It becomes a whore to be painted, to be as faire as her hands can make her, with faigned beauty. But the Church of Christ hath a beauty from her husband, a reall, spirituall beauty, not discerned of the world.

I his should be of use to Gods children themselves, to help them in the upbraidings of conscience (as ifthey had no goodnesse in them) because they bave a great deale of ill. Christians should have a double eye, one to fet and fixe upon that which is ill in them, to humble them, and another upon that which is supernaturally gracious in them, to encourage themselves: They should looke upon themselves as Christ lookes upon them, and judge of themselves as he judgeth of them by the better part. He looks not fo much what ill we have ; for that shall be wrought out by little and little, and be abolished, it is condemned already, and it shall be executed by little and little till it be wholly abolished: But he looks upon us in regard of the better part, fo fhould we looke upon our felves, though otherwhiles upon our blacke feet four infirmities) when we are tempted to pride and haughtinesse; but alwayes let the mean thoughts we conceive of our felves, make us to flie to Chrift.

What is the Belowed more then another Belowed ? Here is a Question, and a Question answered with a Question : Questions they breed know. ledge (as the Greeke Proverbe is) doubtings breed resolution. Whereupon the inquisitive soule ofu-

That Christians in the upbraidings of con(ci ence sould look upon the good as on the ill in them.

That we flouid looke upon our Celves as Chrift looks upon m.

SER.XIV.

Ier. 50.

foule; therefore that great Philosopher counted it as a vertue amongst his Schollers, that they would be inquisitive: So the Schollers of Righteousnesse are inquisitive, they enquire the way to Canaan, and the way to Zion with their faces thither-

wards.

That is a speciall point of wifdometoimprove the gifts of ather by questiIt is a special part of Christians wisedome to improve the excellency of others by Questions, to have a Bucket to draw out of the deep Wels of others (as Solomon saith) The heart of a wise man is as deep waters, but a man of underst anding can tell how to fetch those waters out. There be many men of deep and excellent parts which are lost in the world, because men know not how to improve them; therefore it is good while we have men excellent in any kind, to make use of them. It is an honour to God as well as a commodity to our selves. Doth God suffer lights to shine in the world, that we should take no notice of them? It is a wrong to our selves, and a dishonour to God.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved &c.

Observ.

A further point from hence is, That if we would give encouragement to others to repaire to us for any good, we should labour to be so excellent as to adorne Religion.

o thou fairest among women, what is thy Beloved, &c. They enquire of her because they have a good conceit of her: a world of good might be done, if there were bred a good conceit

of men in others; we fay in fickneffe, a good con. SER.XIV ceit of the Physitian is halfe the cure: so in teaching, a good conceit of the teacher is halfe the learning: The daughters of Ierusalem had a good conceit here in the questioning of the Church, o then fairest among women, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved?

Let us labour therfore to be fuch as may bring honour and credit to Religion, and make it lovely, that what we doe may make others thinke we doe what we doe to great purpose, which is oft times a speciall meanes and occasion of their conversion. Though properly the cause of conversion be the Spirit of God in the ordinances? yetthe inducement (many times) and occasion, is the observation of the course and carriage of those that excell and are knowne to be eminent in parts and in graces, Emulation adds fours to the foule. Doe they take fuch courses that are wifer then I, and shall not I take the like course too! Paul faith, the emulation of the Gentiles shall be a meanes of the conversion of the Jewes, when they shall fee them imbrace Christ, they will be encouraged to doe so also : what shall we thinke therefore of them that live fo as that they bring an evill report, scandall and reproach upon Religion? Great and fearefull is their wickednesse, that by their ill conversation like Hophny and Phineas discredit the ordinances of the Lord.

Now the Church thus answers the former Question touching Christ, My beloved is white and ruddy, the shiefest of ten thousand. She is not afraid

That our endeavours must be to make Religion levely.

Rom. 11, 11,

1 Sam 2,17.

SER.XIV.

That there is
no rivalty in
spiritual things
where is abundance for all of
lave.

to fer out her Beloveds beauty; for there is no envi in hiritual things : It is want of wifedome amongst men to commend a thing that is very lovely to others, and fo to fet an edge upon their affections, when they cannot both fhare; and the more one hath, the leffe another hath of all things here below: But in spirituall things there is no envy at the sharing of others in that we love our felves, because all may be loved alike: Christ hath grace and affection enough for all his : he hath not (as Efan speaks) but one bleffing : No, he can make all his happy. Therefore the Church stands not upon tearmes, when the daughters of Iernsalem enquire about her Beloved, I tell you freely faves the what my Beloved is : First in generall the answer is, My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand; then afterwards there is a specification of the particulars, the will not frand upon the groffe, but admires at every parcell in the thing beloved, every thing is lovely, as wee shall see in particular afterwards.

My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

We will take that which is safe, because we will have sure footing (as near as we can) in this my stical portion of Scripture. What is that white and ruddy? why doth the Charch set forth the spiritual excellencies of Christ by that which is most outwardly excellent and most beautiful?

Because of all complections the mixed complection of these two colours, white and ruddy,

Quest.

Anjw.

is the pureft and the beft, therefore the fers out SER.XIV the beauty and the Spirituall excellency of Christ by this white and ruddy, beauty ariseth of the mixture of these two. First the fers out the beauty of Christ positively, and then by way of comparison, The chiefest among ten thou-Cand.

But what is this white and ruddy? what is

beauty ?

To the making up of beauty there is required a found healthy constitution, so as the particulars have a due proportion, there must be a harmony of the parts, one fuiting with another; for comelinesse stands in onenesse, when many things (as it were) are one. Vncomeline Be is in diverfity, when divers things are jumbled together that belong to many heads: as we fay it is uncomely to have an old mans head on a young mans shoulders; but when all things are fo fuired that they make one agreeing exactly there is beauty and comelineffe.

Besides soundnesse of constitution and comelineffe of proportion, there is a grace of colour that maketh beauty, which arifeth out of the other, fo that soundnesse and goodnesse of constitution, together with the exact proportion of the variety of parts, having with it this gracefulnesse of colour and complection makes up that which we call beauty. In a word, then this carnation colour, white and ruddy, may be understood of that excellent and The frage fweet mixture that makes fuch a graceful neite in Chrift, in him there is wonderfull purity and ho-

What beauty ù. and wherein it confifterb.

Proportion on feature.

In the grace of colour.

Chris.

SER.XIV.

linesse, and yet a wonderfull weaknesse, there is God, the great God, and a pieceof earth, of flesh in one person, a bloudy pierced, and a glorious shining body, humility and glory: Iustice, wonderfull justice, and yet exceeding love and mercy; Iustice to his enemies, Mercy to his Children.

Observ. In what regard Christ was most beautifull. Christ is a most beautifull Person.

Not as God only but as man, the Mediator God and man; the Person of the Mediator is a beautifull Person; as Pfd.45. there is a notable description of Christ, and of his Church, Thou art fairer then the children of men, grace is powred into the lips, &c.

That the lovelines and beauty of Christ must be spiritually considered.

But the loveline fe and beauty of Christ is effecially (birituall, in regard of the graces of his Spirit. A deformed person, man or woman, of a homely complection and conflitution, yet notwithstanding when we discerne them by their conversation to be very wife, and of a lovely and fweet spirit, very able, and withall wondrous willing to impart their abilities, being wondrous usefull, what a world of love doth it breed. though wee see in their outward man nothing lovely. The confideration of what sufficiency is in Christ, wifedome, power, goodnesse and love, that made him come from Heaven to Earth, to take our nature upon him, to marry us and joyne our natures to his (that he might joyne us to him in spirituall bonds) the consideration of his meek. nesse and gentlenese, how he never turned any backe againe that came to him, should make us highly prize him: Indeed some went backe of them-

Mat. 19 32.

themselves (as the young man in discontent) Sar.XIV. Christ turned them not backe; nay he loved the appearance of goodneffe in the young man, and embraced him. He is of fo fweet a nature, that he never upbraided those that followed him with their former finnes; as Peter with deniall, and the like. He is of fo gracious a nature, that he tooke not notice of petty infirmities in his Disciples, but tels them of the danger of those finnes that might hurt them, being of fo fweet a nature, that he will not quench the smoaking flax, nor breake the bruifed reed, his whole life being no thing but a doing of good, He did all things well (as the Gofpell speaks)excellent well.

Now the confideration of what a gracious Spirit is in Christ, must needs be a loadstone of love, and make him beautifull. Therefore Bernard faith well, When I thinke of Christ, I thinke at once of God full of majesty and glory, and at the same time of Man, full of meekneffe, gentleneffe and freet. welle. So let us confider of Christ as of the Niebry God, powerfull; and withall confider of him as a gentle and mild man, that came riding meckly on an Affe(as the Scripture fets him our) He was for all commers, and gave entertainment to all, Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, &c. For the most weake and miserable person of all had the sweetest entertainment of him, He came to feeke and to fave that which was loft. Let us I fav thinke of him both as of the great God. and withall as of a meek Man; the one to effablifh our foules, that he isable to doe great mat-

10.43.

Simile

06 erb.

Mat 21.

Mat. 11-18. oralida ada ai

o all.

Luk 16.10.

San.XIV.

ters, the other to draw us to him because he loves us. We are afraid to goe to God a consuming fire, but now let us think we goe to bone of our bone, and flesh of our slesh, to our brother, to one that out of his goodnesse abased himselse of purpose that we might be one with him, who loved us more then his owne life, and was contented to carry the curse for us that we might be blessed of God for ever, and to suffer a most painfull and shamefull death, that so he might make us heires of everlasting life.

Christ is spiritually lovely, the chiefest of ten thousand. The Church sets him out by comparison, a standard-bearer, a carrier of the banner of ten thousand: For, as the good liest men use to carry the Ensigne, the Banner, so he the good liest of all

other is the standard bearer.

Whence we gather, That Christ as he is beautifull and good, so he is incomparably beyond all comparison good; He is a standard-bearer, one among ten thousand, anounted with the oyle of gladnesse above his fellowes.

First, for that he is so near to God by the per-

fonall union.

And in regard likewise, That all others have all from him; of his fulnessewereseive grace for grace, ours is but a derivative fulnesse, his glory and thining is as the shining of the body of the Sun, ours as the light of the Aire, which is derived from the glory of the Sun; ours is but the fulnesse of the streame, and of the vessell, but the fulnesse of the fountaine and of the spring is his; thereupon

Simile.

Objery,
Pial, 45.7.
In regard of the
perforalt quien
meth the Godbead in our nature, Chriff in
the chiefe of all.
In regard all
our julnes comes
from Chriff, he
is the chiefe
of all.

Simile.

SEE.XIV. Col. 1.18.

he is called the head of the Church; the head is the tower of the body which hath all the five lenses in it and wisedome for the whole body. It seeth, heareth, understandeth, and doth all for the body, having influence into the other parts of it : So Chrift is above all, and hath influence into all his Church, not onely eminencie, but influence.

That Christ is fet foreb by all eart bly excellencies. Mal.4 2,

What is excellent in the Heavens ? the Sunne, So Christ is the Sunne of Righteousnesse: the Starres? He is the bright morning Starre: the Light? He is the Light of the world. Come to all Creatures, you have not any excellent amongst them but Christ is filed from it : He is the Lyon of the tribe of Inda, the Lilly and the Role, and the Lambe of Godthat taketh away the finnes of the world she Tree of Life, &c. There is not a thing necessary to nature, but you have a stile from it given to Christ, to shew that he is as necessary as Bread and Water, and the food of life. When we fee Light therefore, thinke of the true Light : when the Sunne, thinke of the Sunne of Righteousne Be : fo remember the bread and water of life in our common food : therefore the Sacraments were ordained, that as we goe to the fea by the conduct of rivers, fo we might goe to the fea of all excellency and goodnesse by the conduct of thefe rivers of goodnesse, to be led by every exi cellency in the creature to that of our Mediatour Christ, who is the chiefest among ten that That christ on fand.

Joh 6. Joh. 4.

ly was King. Prieft, and Propost.

To come more particularly to speake of his

SER.XIV.

excellencies, omitting his two Natures in one Perfon God and Manathat we may confider his Offices, a King, Prieft, and Prophet : He being the chiefe in all thele, fo all good Kings before him were types of him, as also the Prophets and Priests, he was all in one. Never any before him was King, Prieft, and Prophet, as he was King, Priest, and Prophet in one, so in every respect he was incomparable above all. Such a King as is King of Kings, and Subdueth things unconquerable to all other Kings, even the greatest enemies of all, fueh a King as conquered the World, Death, Hell, and Sinne, all things that are terrible: Death you know is called the King of feares, because it terrifieth even Kings themselves. Christ is fuch a King as takes away thefe terrible greatest ils of all: Such a King as rules over the foule and conscience (the best part of man) where he fettles and stablisheth peace : Such a King as fets up his Kingdome in our very foules and hearts, guides our thoughts, defires, actions, and affections, fetting up a peaceable government there: fohe is an incomparable King even in regard of that Office, He is the chiefest of ten thousand, such a King as carries the government upon his owne shoulders; as it is, 1/a.9.6. He devolves not therare to another to make it as he lift, and fo be a cypher himselfe, but he carries all upon his owne shoulder, he needs not a Pope for his Vicar.

2. A Priefi. Againe, as a Prieft, such a High-prieft as offered himselfe a sacrifice by his Eternall Spirit: He as

God

God offered up his Man-bood, fuch a Prioft as SER.XIV. hath fatisfied the wrath of God, and reconciled God to Man. All other Priefts were but types of this Prieft, who is fuch a Prieft as never dyes, but lives for ever to make intercession for us in Heaven, by vertue of that facrifice which he offred in the dayes of his flesh : He was both Priest and Sacrifice. fuch a Prieft as is touched with our infirmities, fo mild and gentle, full of pitty and mercy. No Priest to this Priest, God only fmelt a sweet smell from this facrifice.

And for his Propheticall Office, he is a Prophet beyond all others, such a one as can instruct the foule: Other men can propound doctrines, but he can open the understanding, and hath the key of the heart, the key of David which can open the foule, by his holy Spirit he can make the very fimple full of knowledge; such a Prophet as hath his chaire in the very heart of man, this great Bishop of our soules, the Angell of the Covenant, that pople, the messenger of the Father: so he is the chiefe of ten thousand; consider him as King, as Prieft, or as Prophet.

- The use of this is exceeding pregnant, comfortable and large, that we have fuch a Saviour, fuch an eminent person, so near, so peculiar to us. Our Beloved, my Beloved : If he were a Beloved the chiefe of ten thousand, it were no great matter, but he is mine, he is thus excellent; excellent confidered with propriety in it, and a peculiar propricty; peculiarity and propriety together with transcendent excellency makes happy, if there be any empying Happines wh

Luk. 24. Prov. I.

1 Prt. 2, 2 5. royds.

Us.

SER.XV.

of it. Therefore repent not your felves of your repentings, but thinke I have not cast away my love, but have fet it upon such an object as deferves it, for my Beloved is the chiefest of sen thoufund.



The fifteenth Sermon.

CANT. V. X.

My Beloved is white andruddy, the chiefest among tenthousand.

23000 is fuch a boundleffe affection, that where it once breaks forth in praises upon a good foundation, it knowes no measure, as we see here in the Church, who being provo-

ked, and (as it were) exasperated by the daughters of lerufalem, to explaine the excellency of him thee had with so much affection incessantly fought after, That the might justifie her choice (ere she descend into particulars) she breaks forth into this generall description of her Beloved, whereby the cuts off from all hopes of equalling him, My Beloved is white and ruddy (exceeding faire) nay, the chiefe among ten thouland (none like

him fhe would not have us thinke fhe had be SIR.XV. flowed her love but on the most excellent of all. the chiefe of ten thousand Well were it for us that we could doe fo in our love, that we might be able to justifie our choice, not to spend it on finfull, vaine and unprofitable things, which cause repentance & mourning in the conclusion, wherof the Church here worthily cleareth her felf, in that the had chosen the chiefe among ten thousand,

And most justly did the place her affections up. on so excellent an object, who was so full of all the treasures of wisedome and knowledge, the life of our life, in whom dwelt all the fulnesse of the Godhead bodily, in whom was a gracious mixture and compound of all heavenly graces, where Greatmesse and Goodnesse, Instice and Mercy, God and Man meet in one Person. Such an one who breaks no bruifed reed, nor quenches the (moaking Mat. 12. flax, who refuses not finners, but invites them unto him, offering to heale all and cure all who come unto him:He is a King indeed, but this alfo loha ;. approves her choice; he rules all, commands all, judges all, what then can she want who hath fuch a friend, fuch a husband, whose government is fo winning, mild and mercifull?

He is not fuch a Monarch as loves to get authority by sternnesse like Rehoboam; but by those amiable graces of gentleneffe and love, all the excellencies of holineffe, purity and righteoufnes, are fweetly tempered with love and meckneffe in him. You may fee for instance how he takes his Disciples parragainst the Pharisees (and the

peore

Sun. XV. Lok.7.44. That Christ takes part with the afficted fide. poore womans that came to wash his feet and kiffed them) against the Pharifee that had invited him to dinner. The Church is a company of defpifed people, that are scorned of Pharifaicall proud spirits, who perhaps have morality and strength of parts to praise them with. Now Christtakes part with the broken spirits against all proud spirits, howseever he be gone to Heaven (where he is full of Majefty) yet he hath not forgotten his meckneffe, nor changed his nature with change of honour. He is now more honoured then he was ; for , he hath a Name above all Names, in Heaven or in Earth, yet he is pittifull Still Saul, Saul, why per fecutest thou me? He makes the Churches case his owne still, together with beames of glory, there are bowels of pitty in him, the fame that he had here upon earth: Which makes him fo lovely to the truly broken hearted beleeving foule, My Beloved is white and ruddy.

He is set out likewise by comparing him with all others whatsoever, he is the chiefe of sen show. sand, a certaine number for an uncertaine, that is, the chiefe among all. In all things Christ hath the preheminence; He is the first borne from the dead, he is the first borne of every creature, he is the eldest brother, he is the chiefe among all: For all Kings, Priests and Prophets before were but types and shadowes of him: He the body, the truth and the substance. And (as was shewed before) he is all three in one, King, Priest and Prophet, the great Doctor and Prophet of his Church, that spake by

A&. 9

The chiefest of ten thousand.

all the former Prophets, and speaks by his Ministress to the end of the world. The Angell of the
Covenant, that words, the world that expresset his
Fathers brest, that as he came from the bosome
of his Father, so layes open his counsell to mankind. It was he that spake by Noah, and preached
by his Spirit to the soules that are now in prison
(as Peter speaks) so he is the chiefe among all: But
especially in regard of his Righteousnesse; for
which Paul accounted all dung and drosses but
the Righteousnesse was the Righteousnesse, but
the Righteousnesse which is in Christ: which is more

then the Righteousnesse of an Angell, being the Righteousnesse of God-Man, and above all the Righteousnesse of the Law.

But what is this to us or to the Church? yes, for his beauty and excellency is the Churches, because he is the Churches. Acy Beloved is white and ruddy, and my Beloved is the chiefe among ten thousand. It is the peculiar interest that the Church hath in Christ that doth relish her Spirit, excellency with propriety in him: I am my Beloved is mine. The more excellent the husband is, the more excellent is the wise, she onely shines in his beames; therefore it is the interest that we have in Christ that indeares Christous. But to come to more particular application of it, Is Christ thus excellent, superexcellent, thus transcendently excellent, white and ruddy, the chiefe of tanthousand? This

To draw thefe that are not yet in Christ unto bim.

33Z

Sus.XV.

1 Pet. 3.19.

Phil.3.8.

Anym.
That peculiariatic of interest joyned with the excellencie of Christ is than which so raviation to the

Church.

How O

s is a Limber Large die 172 Large die 172

ferves.

Ufe I. That superemi.

nent excellecies in Chrift ongbt to draw thofe to bim who are not vet drawne te bim.

That with a febt of Christs excellency, we muft fee our owne debt, beegery and milery to draw in unto chrift.

1 Cor.3,22.

Quest.

Antw. That feeing the end of our mifery is to mor us 10 come unto Chrift , wee should not bee discouraged to come unto bim.

To comfort shofe that are in Chrift.

First, those that are not yet in Christ, not contracted to him to draw them; what can prevaile more then that which is in Christ ? Beauty and excellencies, greamesse and goodnesse. And indeed one maine end of our calling, the Ministery is, to lay open and unfold the unfearchable riches of Christ, to dig up the mine, thereby to draw the affections of those that belong to God to Chrift.

But it is not enough to know that there are excellencies in Christ to draw us to him : but, there must be a sight of our misery, what beggers we are, and how indebted. Before we are in Christ we are not our owne, the Devill layes claime to us that we are his, death layes claime to us, we are under finne, we cannot fatisfie one of a thousand therefore this inforceth to make out to joine with him that can discharge all our debts, answer all our Inits, and non-fuit Saran in the Court of Heaven. When once we are married to the Lord of Hervenand earth, all is ours: We have a large Charter, Allthings are yours, and you are Christs, and Christ is Gods.

Why are all things ours?

Because we are married to Christ who is Lord of all. It is the end of our calling to fue for a marriage between Christ and every soule, we are the friends of the Bride to bring the Church to him, and the friends of the Church to bring Christ to them. It is the end of our Ministery to bring the foule and Christ together; and let no

debts.

Rom. 2. 20. Mat 11.28. Luk.Iq. io.

For thofe inthe State of grace to fee what an excellent perfor they bave entertained.

Cant. I.

Luk.10 41.

Use 3. The desperate mi ferable choife of most men.

right

debes, no finnes hinder, forespecially he invites SER.XV fuch as are sensible of their finnes, where sinne abounds grace abounds much more: Come unto me all re that are weary and heavy laden. And he came to feeke and to fave that which was loft He requires no more, but that we be fensible of our debts and miseries, which sence he works likewise by his holy Spirit.

Agains, for those that have entertained Christ, let them fee what an excellent gracious Person they have entertained, who is the chiefe of ten thousand. The world thinks them a company of filly mean people that make choice of Christ-Religion, the Word, and such things; but here is a justification of their choice, they chose him that is the chiefe of ten thousand, Let him kiffe me with the kiffes of his mouth (faith the Spoule) for thy love is better then wine nay then life it felfe. A Christian may justific the choice that he hath made with Mary of the good part, against all those that shall disparage his choice. Let the world account Christians whatthey will, that they are a company of deluded beforted persons, fooles and mad men. The Christian is the only wife man : Wifedome is feen in choice especially; and here is the choice of that which is excellent and most excellent of all, the chiefe of ten thousand.

Soalfo, We may fee here the desperate and base folly of all what soever (save true Christians) what do they make choice of to joyne too, that which is base, the condemned world, vaine transitory things, and refuse Christ: Are they in their San.XV.

PGI SI.

What it is to be married to Christ. right wits who refuse a Husband that is noble for birth, rich for eftate, mighty for power, abundant in kindneffe and love it felfe, every way excellent ? and take a bale, ignoble, beggetly perfon, this is the choice of the world. God complaines, threel wouldnone of me, &c. What shal we judge therefore of those that will none of Christ when he wooes and fues them, but preferre with Elan a melle of pottage before their eternall birthright with Adaman apple before Paradice : and with India thirty pieces of filver before Christ himselfe: This is the state of many men. To be married to Christ is to take him for an husband, to be ruled by himin allthings. Now when we prefer bale commodities and contentments before peace of conference, and the enjoying of his love; what is it, but for pelfe and commodity. thirty pieces of filver (perhaps for fix pence, a thing of nothing to refuse Christ; yet this is the condition of bafe worldlings that live by fenfe and not by faith. So then as it ferves to comfort those that have made a true choice so it serves to thew the madneffe and folly of all others, which one day will feele their hearts full of horrour and confusion, and their faces of figure, when they shall thinke what bath Christ made such fute to my heart to win my love? hath he ordaimed a Mineftery for ro bring me in . made fuch large promifes, is he lo excellent ? and was this discovered to me, and yet would I none of him? what did I chafe ? and what did I leave ? I left Christ with all his riches, and made choice of

SER.XV.

That the greatest losse of all is Christ discovered in his excellency.

Gal.3.

To take beed bow we beare.

the pleasures and profits of sinne, which are but for a feafon. When the conscience is once throughly awaked this will torment it, the punishment of loffe, not of loffe fimply, as the loffe of Christ and the loffe of Heaven, but the lofe of Christ and of Heaven fo discovered and opened; therefore there is no condition in the world so terrible as of those that live in the Church, and heare those things of Christ crucified unfolded to them before their eyes, as Paul speaks of the Ministery, it makes Christ Crosse so open to them as if he had been crucified before their eyes; yet notwithstanding yeeld to their base hearts, defires and affections before those excellencies, which if they had a spirit of faith would draw their hearts to him.

Therefore let us confider how we heare those things, it concernes us nearly; on the one fide we fee what we get if we joyne with Christ, we have him and his : on the contrary we lose him: and not only fo, but we gaine eternall mifery, and perish eternally. O what basenesse of mind posfeffeth us! Christ left all things in love to us, and we leave Christ for any paultry thing in the world almost, to please and content the humours of finfull men, to attaine a few empty titles, to get a little wealth, enjoy a little pleasure. You fee then the equity of that terrible commination that you have, I Cor. 16. If any man love not the Lord Tefus Chrift, let him be Anathema mar anatha: let him be accursed for ever that loves not the Lord lefus Christ: If any man sinne there is a re-Z 3 medv

The chiefest of renebous and.

SER.XV.

medy to ditcharge his fin in Tefus Christ : If he will marry him and take him; but when Christ is offered, and we will have none of him, we finne against the Gospell, and then there is no remedy, there is nothing but Anathema and Maranatha; therefore the most dangerous sinnes of all, are those against the light of the Gospell: when yet we chose rather to live as we lift, then to joyne our felves to Christ. To this purpose, Heb 2. Saint Paul makes an use of the first Chapter, wherein he fets out the excellency of Christ whom the Angels adore he is so beautifull, so lovely, that God the Father is in love with him, and pronounceth thu is my Beloved fonne: In the beginning of the fecond Chapter, Wherefore (faith he' how hall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; for, if they efeaped not that defpifed Mofes Law, &c. How fhall we escape if we neglect fo great falvation? he fives not, if we oppose Christ; but if we neglect him, if we doe not love fo great falvation, as a Thef. .. 8. it is faid, Christ will come in flaming fire totake vengeance of all those that doe not know God, and obey not the Gospell of Christ, though they do not persecute it.

Therefore this reproves all civill morall perfons that thinke they have riches enough, not only debauched persons, but selfe-sufficient perfons, that thinke they have any Righteousnesse of their owne, let them know, that Christ shall comein staming fireto take vergeance of such. This is the scope of the second Plalme, which ye know sets out the excellence of Christ, I have

Mat. 3.17.

Heb. 2.

fet my King upon Zion, God the Father there anoints Chrift King of the Church : To what end ? That we should kife the Sonne, kiffe him with the kiffe of fubication (as Subjects doe their Prince) with the kiffe of love, as the Spenfe doch her Husband, and with the kiffe of faith. But what if we doe not killchim, and subject our selves to him, love him and believe in him. If his wrath be once kindled, happy are all those that trust in him. He is a Lambe, but fuch a one as can be angivias Rev. 6. It is faid, The Kings and great perfons of the world fly from the wrath of the Lambe; He that is fo fweet, mild and gentle, if we joyne with him, on the contrary, if we come not unto bim, we shall find the wrath of the Lambe a terrible wrath, which the greatest Potentates in the world shall defire to be hid from. If his wrathbe once kindled, bleffed are all those that trust in him, and woe be to them that doe not receive him.

For us that professe our selves to be in Christ, and to be joyned to him that is thus excellent, let us make this use, to make him the rule of our choice in other things. In the choice of friends chase such friends to Christ, take heed of society with Idolaters, or with prophane wretched persons. If you will be joyned to Christ, and professe your selves to be so, then let us joyne to none but those that we can enjoy and Christ too: So in marriage let the rule of choice be, the love of Christ; and likewise let the measure of our espect to all things be, therefore to Christ, let us measure our love to wife and children, to kin-

SEE.XV.

p bat it is to

Use 2.
For those who are in Christ to make him the rule of their choise in other things.
In Friendship.

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steer fire tolet

In Marriage.

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dred.

SHR.XV.
In all things
what forver
love all with
reference to
Christ.
1 Cor. 7.39.

Use 3.

Answ. I
By a deep consideration of our
necessity without bim.

That exalting Christ high in the beart is a strong preservative against since.

dred, friends, and to all creatures what foever, as it may stand with love to Christ. Obey in the Lord, Marry in the Lord, doe all things in the Lord, so as may stand with the love and allowance of the Lord.

Make also a Use of direction, How to come to value Christ thus, as to keep an high esteem of him; for this followes infallibly and undeniably: If Christ be the chiefe of ten thousand, he must have the chiefe of our affections, above ten thousand; for as he is in excellency, he must have place in our hearts answerable thereunto; for, then our soules are as they should be, when they judge of, and affect things as they are in themselves.

First, Let us enter into a serious consideration of the need we have of Christ, of our misery without him, of our happinesse if we be joyned with him, the soule being thus convinced, the assertions must need follow the sanctified judgement.

What will come of it, If Christ beset in the highest place in our heart? If we crowne him there, and make him King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, in a hearty submitting of all the affections of the soule to him; while the soule continues in that frame, it cannot be drawne to sin, discomfort, and despaire. The honours, pleasures and profits that are got by base engagements to the humours of men, what are these to Christ? when the soule is rightly, possess of Christ and of his excellency, it disclaims that

any

any thing should come in competition with Sar.XV. him.

Againe, It flands firme against all discouragements what seever; for it sets Christ against all, who is the chiefe of ten thou land. The foule in this case will set Christ against the anger and wrath of God, against Satan and all our spirituall enemies. Christ is the Angell of the Covenant, Satan is a Lyon, a roaring Lyon; Christ the Lyon of the tribe of Iuda; Satan a Serpent, a Dragon: But Christ the true Brazen Serpent, the very looking upon whom will take away all the stings and fiery darts of Satan what soever: wherfore it is faid, I John 5 . that Faith is that that overcommeth the world. How doth Faith overcome the world? Because it overcomes all things in the world, as on the right hand, pleasures, and profits and honours, and on the left hand threatenings, paines, loffes, and difgraces, by fetting Christ against all.

Againe, if we would have a right judgement and esteeme of Christ, Let we labour to weane our affections as much as may be from other things. Fleshly hearts that have run so deeply into the world and vanities of this present life, it is in a fort an extraordinary taske for themto be drawn away, and pulled from the world (as a childe from a full breast) which they have sucked so long. Now for sweet affections that are tender. it is an excellent advantage they have to confider betimes that there is that in Religion and in the Gospell, which is worth their best and prime

We must labor to weare or bearts from other things.

affections,

SER, XV.

The danger of delaying to feek christ late in our old age.

affections, the flower and marrow of them, let them begin with youg Timnby, Daniel and Infeph to love Christ from their childchood, It is a defperate folly on the other hand to put off the regard of good things till after when we shall be lesse fit, when the under standing will be darkned, and the affections blunted; when wee shall not have that edge, nature being decayed, and the world having taken such possession of the soule, that we shall not value this excellency; therefore let us begin betimes to make up the marriage between Christ and the soule, no time indeed is too late, but it were to be wished that those that are young would be thus wise for their soules betimes.

To value Christ we must beg of God a Spirit to judge aright of our corruptions.

bear of first a

Besides, if we would highly value Christ (beg of God a Spirit that we may judge aright of our corruptions) for, in what measure we can discerne the beight and bredth and depth of our corrupt nature in that measure shall we judge of the height and bredth. and depth of the excellency of Christ. The sweetest foules are the most bumble foules , those that love Chilfmoft, are the exhat have been flung mon with the fente of their finnes : where finne most aboundsinthe fonce and feeling of it grace much more abounds in the lense and feeling of that. Did ever fonle love Christ more then that woman charhad fo many Devils ceft out of her & And Paul that had fuch great finnes forgiven? Doth any man fo love his creditor as he that hath much debt forgiven him & It is our Saviour Christs owne reasonsheresore these two goe al-

waves

Rom.5.

Luk.7.

wayes with the true Church. I. The true know- Six.XV. ledge of the corruption of nature, and mifery by reafon of it. And 2. The true fence and feeling of it, with true and hearty forrow for it, &c. In Popery they fleight Originall finne, that mother breeding finne; Actuall fins be veniall fins and many finnes no finnes. And therefore they efterme for fleightly of Chift, that they joyne Saints the Pope, Works & Satufanion with him because they know not the depth of the malady, hew blacke finne is, what a curfed effate we are in by nature: they have fleight, shallow and weake conceits of sinne, therefore they have answerable, weake, and shallow conceits of Christ, and of his Righteonfresse and excellency. Therefore the conviction of our finnes goeth before the conviction of Righteoufnesse in Christ (asit is faid, lob. 16.) The Holy-Ghost shall convince the world of fin, and then of Righteon freste; for except the soule be convinced of fin and of ill in it felfe, it will never be truly convinced of good, and of Righteoulneffe in Christ.

The Paseover was alwayes eaten with fowre herbs, because it should adde a relish to the feast. So Chrift the true Paffeover we never relift truly without fowre herbs, the confideration of finne with the defert of it. Christ favours of herwife to a man humbled for his finnes, then he doth to another man not touched therewith; otherwise to a man humbled for his finnes, then he doth to another man not touched therewith il otherwife to a poore man then be doth to a rich other-

Two attendars o' the true Church. Wby fin is fo Reighted in Popery.

Wby the Paffeover was eaten with fowre berbs.

wife

DE 180 25

wife to a man that the world goes not well on his fide, then to a prosperous man. One savoury discourse of Christ-relisheth more to an afflicted foule; then seven discourses with such as are drunke with prosperity, not having a brain strong enough to conceive, nor an appetite to rellish heavenly things.

That it he great folly to murmure at the covers our firitual tafte andre Hifb.

Therfore why doe we murmure at the croffe, when all is to recover our spirituall tafte and relgroffe which re- lift ? Solomon had loft his tafte and rellift of Christ, he never made his Song of Songs when he was in his idolatrous way, nor was fo in love with Christ and his excellencies when he doted fo much upon his wives:no, but when he had recovered his spirits tast and rellish of heavenly things once, then made he the book of the Preacher. When hee had run through variety of things, and faw all to be nothing but vexation of fpirit; and belides that, vanity, then he paffeth his verdict upon all things that they were vanity. So it is with us, we can hardly prize Christ without fome afflictions, some crosse or other; therefore here the Church is faine to endure a spirituall defertion, to fet an edge upon her affections. Now when the is thus in her defertions, Cirif is white and ruddy the chiefe of ten thoufand.

Want makes m value things she more.

We value more, and fer a higher prize on things in the want of them (fuch is our corruption) then in the enjoying of them. And if God remember us not with affliction, then let us afflict, humble and judge our felves, enter into our owne foules to view how we fland affected

to Christ, to Heaven, and to heavenly things: Sun.XV. how doe I relish and esteeme them; if I have lost my effecme and valuing, where have I loft it, consider in what finne, in what pleasure, in what company I loft it; and converse no more with fuch as doll our affections to heavenly

things.

And, Let us make use likewise of our infirmities and sinnes to this purpose, to set an high prize on the excellencies of Christ, we carry about as alwayes infirmities and corruptions, what use shall wee make of them ? not to trust to our owne righteoulneffe, which is as a defiled clasth : But fly to Christs Righteonfneße, which is the Righteonfache of God Man, all being as dung and droffe in regard of that : Often thinke with thy felfe what am I, a poore finfull creature, but I have a Rightcoufnesse in Christehar answers all: I am weake in my felfe, but Christ is Brong, and I am ftrong in him. I am foolish in my selfe, but I am wise in him, what I want in my felfe, I have in him; heis mine, and his Righteenfnesse is mine, which is the Righteenfueffe of God man, being cloathed with this I Rand fafe against Conscience, Hell, wrath and whatfoever. Though I have daily experience of my fins, yet there is more Rightens neffein Christ who is mine, and who isshe chiefe of ten thousand, then there is finne in me. When thus we shall know Christ, then we shall know him to purpole.

THE the world, and ten thouland worlds

on them. 162.64.6.

SER-XVI.



The fixteenth Sermon.

CANT. V. X. XI, XII, XIII.

My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

His head is as fine gold, his lookes are bushie and blacke as a Raven.

His eyes are as the eyes of Doves, by the rivers of waters, washed with milke and fisly ses, &c.

Object.
More one mans
fathfattion
fhall fathfie for
the fins of all.

Anfw

Ence likewise wee may answer fome doubts that may arise, as why the death of one man (Christ) should be of value for satisfaction for the sinnes of the whole world?

how can this be!

O but what kind of man was he? the chiefe among ten thousand, especially considering that his excellency ariseth from the grace of his Personall Union of God and Man. The first Adam tainted thousands, and would have tainted a world of men more if there had been more; but he was meere man that did this, and shall not Christ God and Man the second Adam advance the world, and ten thousand worlds if there

there had been more, be is chiefe among sen thou. Sen.XVI. fand.

His bead is as most fine gold, bis lockes are bushie and blacke as a Raven, &c.

1. Politively, He is white and ruddy. 2. Comparatively. He is the chiefeft of ten thousand.

The Church doth not thinke it sufficient in generall to fet out Christ thus, but she descends into a particular description of him by all the parts of a body that are conspicuous. First in generall observe hence, That it is the nature of love upon all occasions to reflect upon the thing loved. As the Church here, from things that are excellent in the world, borrows phrases and comparisons to set out the excellency of Christ, exalting him above any other thing. Whatfefoever the foule of a Christian fees in Heaven or Earth, it takes occasion thence to thinke of Christ.

Again, In generall observe from hence seeing the Church fetcheth comparison from Doves eves, from the body of a man and other things, That there are some beames of excellency in every creature. There is somewhat of God in every creature, this makes the meditation of the creature to be usefull : There is none, even the meanest, but it hath a being, and thereby in a fort fets out the being of God. Why doth God stile himselfe a Shield, a Rocke, a Buckler, a Shadow, and the like. But to shew that there is fomething of him in these, and therefore to teach us to rife from them to him, in whom all

Love is ever induftrious to fet out the praifes of the Beloved.

The divers relations takes upon bin Sbewes the beames of bis excellency in the crearures.

thofe

Saw.XVI. those excellencies that are scattered in them are united.

> In innocency we knew God, and in him we had knowledge of the creature, but now we are faincrobelpour felves from the knowledge of the creature to rife to the knowledge of God.

His head is as fine gold.

That - nothing can difbearten the Church from commendine Chrift.

A little in generall, fee the boldnesse and largeneffe of the Churches affections, who though the had been ill intreated by the Wath. men and others, yet is the not differented for all this eno. the goes on, and fets out particular commendations of her Beloved. Where love hath any frength, no water can quench it. You fee the Church here found but cold entertainment from the Watchmen and others that should have been better.

Her inward defertions di fcon rape ker not.

dkoog w

mil a tresser

Bi was leave

STREET DO

Nay, She was in defertion, yet the was not discouraged, nay not from the desertion that Christ left her in ; but she seeks after him whom her foule loved. Oh this is the figne of a true fandified forletoucht from Heaven, never to give over feeking of Christ, nor ferring out his praifes, no though it thinks it felfe not beloved of Chrift. Aske fuch ones, doe you love God, his Children, and his Word ! Oh you shall have them eloquent, no words are enough to fet out their affections.

Reafon of the fuft loves eagerne fe.

And this is one reason, which we may note by the way, why God plants in his children, at their first conversion a fweet love, which we call the first love, the when defertions come, they

the

may call to mind what they felt from Christ, and what they bore to him; and therenpon the Church concludes, Hof.2. I mill returns to my first love, for then was I better then now. The Church here from what doth she commend her Beloved? but from somewhat that was left in her soul, some inward taste of the love of Christ in her, she called to mind how it was with her before in the former part of this, and in the latter end of the former Chapter, what an excellent estate she had been in, this helped her to recover her selse.

Now you may lay, Why is she so exact in resheding up so many particulars of her Beloved, his Head,

Lockes, Eyes, Lips, and fuch like?

Why, It is from largenesse of affection. A large heart bath alway large expressions, when we are barren in expressions towards Christ, and of good things, whence comes this but from narrow poore affections. The Church had large affections; therefore she had finable expressions.

And then she is thus particular, because Christ hath not one but many excellencies; every thing in him is excellent, inward and outward, as his head, &c. For indeed beauty consists not in sweetnesses colour only, but in affinity and proportion of all parts. Now there is all sweet proportion in Christ: so it should be with Christians; they should not have one excellency, but many: those that receive Grace for Grace from Christ have not onely Head, Eyes, Hands, and

Why the Church
is fo exast in
particularifing
her Beloved.

Because a large beart bath unsatisfied affoflions.

Besaufe Christ harb not one but many excellencies in him. Reangley berein it consists.

Ioh. r.

Syn. XVI. Peet good; but all lovely, Grace for Grace, anfwerable to the variety of Graces in Jesus Christ. in whom all things joyntly, and everything feverally are lovely.

Becaufe fbe ba (erica A) exally fludied Chriff to pur. pole.

Then the theweth her particular care and fludy, to be exact in this knowledge of Christ, to rip him up and anaromize him thus from Head to Foot, it argueth the had studied Christ well ere the could attaine this excellency : fo it should be the study and care of every Christian to study the excellencies of Christ, not only in the groffe, to fay as much as you have in the Creed; he was borne for us of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, dead and buried, &cc. which every childe can fay; butto be able to particularize the high perfections and excellencies of Christ; as the Church here, to Audy his Nature, Offices, the State he was in, and how he carried himfelfe in his humiliation and exaltation: what good we have by both faces; Redemption by his abasement; application of it by bis advancement. What he did for us on Earth; what he doth in Heaven; what in Infification, A doprion, S antification, and in the glory to come. Study every thing and warme the heart with the meditation of them.

This particular forcading and laying open the excellencies of Christ is a thing worthy of a Christian. We make sleight worke of Religion, we can be particular and eloquent enough in other things, but in that wherein all eloquence is too little, how barren are we, how framefaced. to speake of Christ and his excellencies in base

company, as if it were a dishonour. Let us there- Sax.XVI fore learne this from the Church here, to be much in thoughts and meditations of the excellencies of Christ, and so our expressions will be answerable to our meditations. So the holy Fathers that were godly (till another kind of Divinity came into the world of Querkes and fubrilties) there was none of them but was excellent this way. Paol admirable, accounting all dung and droffe in comparison of Christ. In speaking of him when he begins, he goes on from one thing to another, as if he were ravished, and knew not how not where to end.

The foule hath fights of Christ that God thewes to it, and which the foure prefents to it felfe by the help of the Spirit. The fights that God in this kind thewes, are to those in affiction especially, as Daniell and Isay saw Christ in his glory in a vision : so Execbiell had a vision, and John Rev. 1. where Christ was prefented to him gloriously. So there is a glorious description of Christ prefent to the Church, Rev. 4.3.

And as there are fights let downe from God into the foule, fo there are fights that the foule frames of Christ, such as the Church here conceives of him by faith : Thus Mofes faw him before he was incarnate, and Abraham faw his day and rejoyced: fo fhould we now have fpirituall fights, Idea of Christ framed to our foules, this is to bellow our foules as we should doc. So much for generall, now wee come to fome particulars. His bead is as fine gold, his lockes

That rbe for barb perulia fighes of its owne. Wil

Sights of fatib frames of Christ

Aplar.

His bead in as fine gold,

1 Cot 3.12,33

SunaXVI are bushic and blacke as a Raven. His Headis as fine gold.

He begins to fer our the excellency of the chiefe part the Head. The Head of Christ is God, as it is, I Car. 11.3. He is above all, and God onely is above him. All is yours, and you are Christs, and Christ is Gods, but that is not fo much intended here, as to flew Christs head-fhip over the Church, as God and Man, his Head is as fine gold, that is, his government and head-ship is a most sweet and golden government.

That a bead o christs go-Simile.

Daniel a. You have an Image of the Monarchies, the first whereof bad a golden Head, which was the Chaldean. The best Monarchy is fectont by the best mentall gold : so Christebe head of the Church is a precious head; a head of gold.

A Head hath an eminency above all others, an influence and motion above all other parts, it is the feat of the fences : fothis golden head is more eminent then all, governes the whole Church, and hath influence into all; in him we

live, and move, and have our being.

Quest by Christ bead of gold. Ant w.

Why is Christ as King thus resembled to an head of gold?

Because gold is the chiefe, the most precious. durable mettall of all others. Christ is a King for ever, and hath an everlafting government. Gold is also the most pliable mettall, you may beare it out to leaves more then any other mettall whatfoever. Christ is all gold indeed, his love hath beat himselfe out as low as may be, all | SER.XVI

for our good. What abasement like to Christs ? That which is most precious is most communicating, as the Sunne a glorious creature, what doth fo much good as it ? fo Christ as he is the most excellent of all, the chiefe of tenthousand, fo is he also the most communicative: what good to the good that Christ did ? hee was beaten out of love to mankinde to lowest abasement for us, though this be not mainly aymed at here, yet (by the way) speaking of gold, we may present to our selves such comfortable medirations.

Well then is Christ such an excellent head, a golden head, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisedome to governe his Church, what need wethen goe to that triple crowne, having fuch agolden head, the Apostacy of the Church hath found out another golden head, is not Christ precious enough ? Let us take heed of leaving the head Christ, as it is Col. 2. 19. It is a damnable thing to forfake him. Let the Apostaticall Church alone with her Antichrift.

Againe, if Christ be a golden head, let us his members labour every one to be furable, though there be difference between the head and the members in many respects, especially in those three formerly named, Eminency, Government, and Influence; yet for nature they are one, head and members make but one: So that as the head of the body is gold, fo should every member be; therefore the feven Churches are stiled feven

Ule I. That there is no golden bead of the Church but Christ.

We must be futable to Chrift our bead.

Aa a

golden

SET.XVI

eniden Candleftickes. Everything in the Tabernacle was gold, even to the fouffers, to shew that in the Church every thing is excellent. The Tabernacle was gold most of it, though it was covered with Budgers-skins. The Church indeed hathapoore covering, as of Badgers skins, not guilded as hypocrites, but it is precious within. Againe, Christ as he is gold, fo he is fine gold, wholegold, he hath not only the crown on him, but his head is gold it felfe. Other Kings their crownes are of gold, but their heads are not fo: but there is fuch a precious tres fure of wifedome in him that his head is gold : fo let the Church and every Christian labour not to be guilt but gold, to be throughly good, to have the infide as good as the outlide, the heart as good as the conversation, the Church is glorious within, Pfa.45. Beloved, Is Christ an excellent golden head, and fhall he have a base body ? Is he ficto be united to a golden head that is a common drunkard, a (wearer, that is a beaft in his life and converfatis on, is this furable?

To know that all our excellent cies come from a golden bead.

Rev-4.10.

Againe, Is our head for golden, and what foever excellency we have, is it from our head? therefore as the Church in the Revilation, let us cast all our crownes at his feet. Have we crownes of gold, any thing that is excellent within, any grace, any comfort, let us lay it downe at his feet, for all is from him. Naturall men have golden Images of their owne, Israel would have golden calves, Nepuchaduenna fets up a golden Image, and all must worthip it; so in the decliping times

2000

Mag.

of the Church, they framed golden Images, that Sun.XVI. is, a golden, whorish Religion, guilded, and painted framed by their owne braine, whereupro all must stoop. But the true gold is that we must respect and submit our selves unto and admire. others are but golden dreames and I mages (as Nebuchadnezzars was) Christs head alone is of fine

gold.

All must be fine gold that comes from this head, his word is gold, fomerimes purged in the fire : his ordinances gold, in the Scripture phrase, the City, the new Ierusalem, which signifirs the state of the Church in this world, when it shall be refined to the utmost, all is of gold, the wals of precious stones, the gates of pearle, and the pavement of the streets of pure gold to shew the excellency of reformation, which golden times are yet to come, in the meane time let us goe on and wait for them.

His locks are bushie and blacke as a Raven.

I hink this is but complementall to fill up the other, it is nothing but a commendation of his freshnesse, a foile to beauty, therefore not particularly to be flood upon.

His eyes are as doves eyes by the vivers of waters.&c.

His eyes are as doves eyes, and fuch eyes as are by the rivers of waters, where they are cleanled and washed with milke, that they may be the clearer, and fitly fer, neither gogle eyes, nor funk into the head, but fitly fet ; as a jewell in a ring, neither too much in, nor too much out, to fet our

Aa 4

the

Pfalasi: 0.

Rev. 21-21

Rev. 215

Quest Anfw.

SER.XVI. the comelinesseof this part the eye which is the glory of the face.

Why is Christ faid to have the eyes of doves? The dove hath many enemies, especially the white dove is a faire marke for the birds of prey, therefore God bath given that creature a quickefight, that the might discerne her enemies. Thus the Scripture helps us to conceive of the quicknesse of Christs eye, Rev. 5.6. there are seven hornes and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, here Christ the Lambe hath feven eves and feven hornes : what bethefe ? Chrift harh not onely bornes of power as the enemies have hornes of violence : he hath horne against horne; but feven eyes, that is, a quicke fight to fee all the danger the Church is in, and feven eyes : feven is a word of perfection, that is, he hath many eyes, an accurate fight : He hath not onely an eye of providence over the whole world; but an eye of grace and favour, lively and lovely in regard of his Church. All things are naked and open before his eyes, as it is, Heb. A. he can fee through us, he knowes our very hearts and raines, which he must doe ex officio, because he must be our Judge. He that is Judge of all had need to have eyes that will piercethrough all. It had need be a quicke eye that must judge of the heart and affections; but what may we learne hence. That wee have a Saviour that hath doves eyes, that is, cleare eyesable to difcorne.

Ule.I. the Church. Joh 12

Take it as a point first of all comfort to the Church, Church, that when we have any imputation lies upon us, that we are thus and thus. Christ hath quicke eyes, he knowes our hearts, then knowest (saith Peter) Lord that I love thee, in all false imputations rest in the eye-sight of Christ, he knowes

it is otherwise with us.

Then againe in all abasement know, that there is an eye that sees all; he sees with his eye, and pitties with his heart: As he hath a quicke eye, so he hath a tender hearr, though he seemes to sleep and to winke, it is but that we may wake him with our prayers, which when we have done we shall see that Christ hath seene all this while, and that the violence the enemies of God have offered to his Church, the Spouse hath been in his sight, and that they shall know at length to their cost.

Likewise it is a point of terrour to all hypocrites and others that thinke to blindfold Christ againe. Can they blindfold him in Heaven that hath this sharpeye? No he sees all their courses and projects what they are, and what they tend to, and as he sees them so he will spread them all

open ere long.

And as it is a point of comfort and terrour, so it is a point of instruction to us all, that wee having to deale with a Judge that sees all, to worship Christ in Spirit. If we had knowledge that such an eye of God is fixed upon us in all places, in all our affections and actions, would we give liberty to base and filthy thoughts, to cruell designes, and to treacherous aymes and intents,

Use 2.
It is both corresort and terror

Use 3. Instruction to mall. SER.XVI.

to batch a hell (as it were) in our hearts, and to carry a faire shew outwardly! it could not be. Men are not afraid of their thoughts, affections, desires, and inward delights of the soules because there is no eye of justice upon them; but if they did consider that the All-seeing God did observe these inward evils, and would call them to account one day for them, then they would be as well afraid to thinke ill as to doeill.

His cheekes are as beds of spices, and as sweet

flowers.

Cheekes are the grace of the face, they are used here to denote the presence of Christ, which is sweet as spices and flowers; not onely his presence is glorious in Heaven, when we shall see that goodly person of Christ that became man for us, that transforming sight that shall make us like himselfe; but the spiritual presence of Christ in his ordinances, which we are capable of here, this is as spices and flowers.

Obiett.

But you will say, Checkes, face, and presence present colorists the eyes, and not smels, as spices and slowers which are the peculiar object of another sence?

Anfw.

Oh but Christ is the object of all the senses. Beloved, he is not onely beauty to the eye, but sweetnesse to the smell, and to the tast; therefore faith hath the name of all the senses, to see, heare, tast, and smell, and doth all, because it carries us to Christ, that is in stead of all to us, but the point is.

Objerv.

That the manifest ation of Christ to bu Church and

children by his Spirit in any of his ordinances, is a Sax. XVI. (meet manifestation, and delectable as spices and flowers, as it is, Cani. 1.3. Because of the favour of thy good oyntments, thy name is as an oyntment powred our, therefore the Virgins love thee. The very name of Christ when he is knowne and laid open by the ministery, is a precious oyntment, and the Virgins, that is, all chafte foules follow him by the smell of his oyntments, all his ordinances convay a fweetnesse to the soule; his Sacraments are fweet, his Word fweet, the communion of Saints fweet. The presence of the Sun you know is knowne in the Spring time by the freshnesse of allthings, which pur forth the life, and little livelineffe they have in them ; fome in bloffoming, and fome in flowers; that which lay (as it were) dead in Winter, it comes out when the Sunne drawes neare: fo when Christ comes and shewes his presence and face to the foule, he refresheth and delights it.

That all Chrisis ordinances are |weet and lovely, and mbat fo. ever proceeds from them.

Hence we fee they are enemies to Christ and to the foules of Gods people, that binder the manifestation of Christ, whereby his face might be feene, and his lovely checkes diference; those that have and undermine the ordinances of God, they hinder the comforts of their owne foules.

And they are enemies to Christ, for when hath Christ glory but when the Virgins follow him in the fent of his fweet eyatments, when the foule in the fense of his fweetnesse followes him and cleaves to him with joy, love, and delight,

this

SER.XVII this makes Christ Christ, and fets him up in the heart above all others. This is the proper worke of the ordinances. Those therefore that are enemies to the ordinances of Christ, are enemies to the foules of Gods people, and to the glory and honour of Christ himselfe. Thus farre we may goe fafely upon comparison of this with other Scriptures.



The seventeenth Sermon.

CANT. V. XIII.

His lips are like Lillies dropping sweet smelling myrrh, his bands are as goldrings fet with Berill, his belly is as bright Twory overlaid with Saphires, bu legs &c.



N speaking of these particulars we are to be very wary, for we have not that foundation as we have in other generals; for no doubt but the Spirit of God here did more intend to fer out the largeaffecti-

on that the Church had to Chrift, then to infinuate any great particularity in every one of thefe therefore let us onely cull our, and take those things that are of more case explication.

His Lips are as Lillies dropping downe fuces

murrh.

That is, his doctrine is as fweet as the Lillies. and found as the myrrh, keeping from purrefaction, it being the nature of myrrh, as it is found its felfe, fo to make other things found. In like menner the speech of Christ makes the foule found that embracerh it. What was ever more fweet Luk.4.10. then the truth of Christ when he foake him. selfe they all hung upon his lips (as the phrase is in the Gospell) as a man hangsupon the lips of another whom he defires and delights to heare! speake, and they marvelled at the gracious words that came out of his lips, Plal, as, Grace was in his lips, all was (weet that came from him, for it came from the excellency of his Spirit, his words were died in these affections of his heart. In the learned language, the fame word fignifieth freech and reason, to intimate that speech is but the current of reason from the heart the fear of tenson; therefore Christs speeches were sweet, because his heart was fweet, full of all love, grace, mercy, and goodneffe, his heart was a treafure his lips much needs then be fweet. Beloved therefore let us bence take a tryall of our felves what our condition is, whether the words that come from Christ when he speaks in his Miniftery to as be fweet or not.

The Word (to some kind of men) is like the Northemeliavre which parcheth and ouseth;

Abab

Su R. XVI Kin. 21; Mark 6, 16. Ad. 22, 22. Abab could not endure the breath of Elian, nor Herodian the breath of Iohn Baptift, nor the Pharifees the breath of Steven and Paul. So too many now adayes cannot endure the breath of divine truth when it cuts and pierceth. These words are arrowes that sticke; if they stick not savingly, they stick to killing; if we cannot endure Christs breath, we are not his Spouse, nor have any communion with him.

His lips are lake lillies dropping facet myrrb,&cc.
This is one excellency of Christ and of his truth, that it preserves the soule in a pure estate, it is pure it selfe, and so it preserves the soule. Myrrh is a liquor that keeps from putresaction: there is nothing that keeps the soul but the word that endures for ever, whereas on the other side errour is of a putrifying nature, corrupting and designe the soule.

His bands are as goldrings fet with Berill,&c.

Mands are the inftruments of actions, Christs actions are precious, whatfoever he doth to the Church, may even when he doth use evill mento afflict and exercise the Church, he hath a hand there, a golden, a precious hand: In the evill hand of wicked men God doth all things by Christ, he is as it were Gods hand which all things passe through whose hands all things came to the rest fo all things come through Christs hands to us, and whatfoever is his handy worke is good, even as it is said in the dayes of his steff, he did all things well: so still in the Churchall his work-manship

That all Christs
actions whatforever are preclose.
Heb. 1.
Ioh, 5.22.

Menniotor.

manship is exceeding well, though we cannot Sax.XVII fee the excellency of it, it is all well both in the government of the Church and his workman. thip in our hearts, the new creature.

His belly is as bright Twory overlaid, &c.

His belly that is his inward parts : In the Hebrew it is used for the inward affections, they are as bright Yvory overlaid with Saphires, that is. they are pure, all the infide of Chrift, all his af fections that he beares are wondrous good, his love, his defires, his joyes, his hatred, all pure, like pure water in a Chryffall glaffe,ir may be firred fometimes but fill it is cleare there are no drees at the bottome, because there was no tainball fin in him.

His legs are as pillars of marble fet on fockets of fine gold, &cc.

Tharis, all his passages and waves are constant and firme even as pillars of marble, his children are so likewise as farre as they are indued with his Spirit. Christ is yesterday, to day, and the fame for ever. In regard of his enemies, Revit. He is let out in another manner of fimilitude, as having legs of braffe to trample them all in pieces. But in respect of his constant truth and wayes of goodnesse to his Church, his legs are as pillars of marble. The more of the desire of

Hu Countenance is as Lebanon, excellent arthe Ceders.

Lebanon was a goodly Forrest lying on the North fide of Judga, wherein were excellent plants of all kinds cipecially Cedara Chrishis All Christ:

Caralana J

SER.XVII

countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Codars, that is, his prefence is goodly, frately, and majesticall, so it is and will be when he shewes himselfe indeed for the vindicating of his Church, then the enemies thereof shall know that his presence is as Lebanon, and excellent as the Cedars.

In what regard christians are like unto Codars.

The Children of God are like to Cedars too, for they are Christ mysticall. Other men are as should to them, men of no value, but they are Cedars, and grow as feder in Lebanon, from perfection to perfection, bearing most fruit in their age. Wicked men sometimes are Cedars too, and are faided grow and stourish as the Cedars in Lebanon: But looke a while, and you shall see their place no more, they have no good root, no good foundation. A Christian is a Cedar set in Christ the shieft Gralar, he is a plane that growes in him, he hash an exemptal root, and therefore he sourisher heresally.

How wicked men are faid alfo to be Celars. Pfal.37.

Bir mouth is most fiven be is altogether levely.

That the words of Christ wherby he manifests fatherly affedian to me dreof all things most west.

His mouth is must fweet. The doubles this commendation, the had faid before his lips are as Lillies dropping fweet mytth, here the faith agains of his mouth, it is most fweet, to fliew that that is the chiefelovely thing in Christ, the repetition argueth the feriousness of the Churches assection to Christ, and of the excellency of that part. The main lovely thing is that which comes from his heart by his words and his lips, as induced the most excellent hing that we can thinke of is the expression of the heart of God in Christ.

most sweet. And indeed the best discovery of a

Chrift, and of Chrifts love to us, His month is SER.XV

true affection to Christ, and of a true estate in grace, is from our affection to the word of Christ Wheresoever there is interest unto Christ, there is a high respect to the word, My theep heare my voice, John 10. and you know what Paer faith, John 6. Many of Christs hearers and followers for fooke him (upon fome hard speethes, as they thought that came from him) faith Christ to Peter, Will ye also leave me ? Peter answe . Ioh. 6.68. ted againe, Whether Lord shall we goe, thou hast the words of eternall life? The Apostles that had the Spirit of God perceived an incredible graciousnesse to sit on his lips; and therefore they hung upon his lips, Whether shall we goe, thou haft the words of eternall life? If weeleave his speech we leave our comfort, we leave our

As a comment hereupon, see Pfal. 19. Where we have a high commendation of Gods excellency: First from the booke of nature, the works of God, the Heavens declare the glory of God, then from the word of God, and herein the Pfalmist is wondrous large. The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the foul, the testimonies of the Lord are fure making wife the fimple, the ftatutes of the Lord are right and rejoyce the heart, the commandements of the Lord are fure, and enlighten the eyes, more to be defired then gold, yeathen fine gold, fweeter alforheithe hony or thehony-combe. Bb But

life.

SBR.XVII

Duest,
When the word
of God is precious to us to gold

An w.

But marke the order, when is the word of God precious as gold, sweeter then the honey or the honey combe; but when the former commendation takes place, where the word is perfect converting the soule, and where it is sure, making wifethe simple, and where the seare of the Lord is cleane, &c. There it is more to be desired then sine gold, and sweeter then the honey-combe. So the Church here sinding sirst of all the word to be a converting word, and giving understanding to the simple, she cannot but speake of the sweetnesse of the word of Christ, his lips are as Lillies dropping sweet smelling myrth, his mouth is most sweet. Thus a man may know his estate in grace by his relliss

That our frate in grace to the word may bee different by our relift to the word.

of the word.

Rom.8.

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Mat. 28. Luk, 11.13.

I Ioh, 1.9.

IG. t.

There is a divine and a heavenly rellish in the word of God, as for instance take the doctrine of his providence, That all things shall workergether for the best to them that love God. What a sweet word is this, a whole kingdome is not worth this promise, That whatsoever besals a Christian in this world, there is an over-ruling providence to sway all to good, to help forward his eternal good.

That Christ will be present with us in all conditions, what a sweet word and promise is this, That he will give his boly Spirit, if we beg it, that he will not faile us nor for sake us. That if we confesse our sinnes and lay them open, he is mercifull to forgive them, That if any sinnes were as red as skarlet, they shall all be white as wooll. What kind of inciedible

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ble sweetnesse is in these to a heart that is pre- San.XVII pared for these comforts, the doctrine of Reconciliation, of Adoption, of Glory to come, of the offices of Christ, and such like, how sweet are they, they rellish wondrously to a sanctified foulc.

Let us therefore discerne of our estate in grace by this, how doe werelish divine truths? are they connaturall and futable to us ? doe wee love them more then our appointed food ? are they dearer unto us then thousands of gold and filver ? doe we like them above all other truths whatfoever ? Every truth in its ranke is lovely and is a beame of God: For truth is of God whereleever we finde it; but what are other troths to this heavenly foule-faving truth, this Gospelltruth, that is from Christ, his mouth is most fweet .

In our nature there is a contrary disposition and Antipathy to divine truth. We love the Law better then the Gospell, and any truth better then the Law. Welove a flory, any trifling baubling thing concerning our ordinary callings better then divine truth. In divine truth as things are more spirituall, so the more remote they are naturally from our love and liking. Evangelicall truths will not downe with a naturall heart, fuch an one had rather heare a quaint point of some vice or vertue finely flood uponthen any thing in Christ, because he was never truly convinced of his corrupt and miserable estate by nature; but when the grace of God hath altered him, and his eyes are open

Exbortation to try our fate in grace by our relifb of divine trutbs.

Pfal 119. 117. Pfal.119 72,

That there is in our nature 44 Antipathy

Bb 2

SER.XVII to fee his mifery, then of all truths the truth of Chrift favours best: Those truths that come our of the mouth of Christ, and out of the ministery concerning Christ they are most sweet of all. Oh how fweet are those words in the Gospell to the poore man, thy finnes are forgiventhee, doe you thinke they went not to his heart? So to the woman, Luk. 7. her many finnes are forgiven her, for she loved much, Oh they were words that went to her foule. And to the theefe on the croffe, This day then shalt be with me in Paradice, how doe you thinke those words affected him ? Soit is with us, if ever we have been abased in the fence of our finnes, O how fweet is a promise of mercy then. He that brings it is as one of ten thou. fand, that comes to declare to man his righteou fres, to lay open the mercy that belongs to a diffreffed foule, Oh the very feet of those that bring these glad tidings are beautifull; When our bleffed Saviour after his refurrection spake to Alary, and called her by her name, after that the had fought him and could not find him (Oh Raboni, faith they the words of Christ they melted her prefearly. Let Christ once call us by our names, for he knowes us by name, as he knew Mofes, let him by his Spirit speake to us by name, and own us, then we call him Raboni, we owne him again, for what is our love but the reflection of his back againe ? Therefore (faith the Pfalmift) Let me beare the voice of joy and gladuesse, that the bones that thouhast broken may rejoyce. Let me houre, that is, I long for thy word to heare it, not the

bare

Luk 23.

Iob 33.23

Rom. 10, 15.

Exod.34. Ifa.43. L.

Pfal. st.

That Christ

every way com fidered is alto-

gether lovely.

bare ministeriall word, but the word of the Spi. Sun.XVII rit; but the Church resteth not here, but faith further,

of ut

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u

He is altogether lovely.

Altogether defireable, as if he should fav, what should I stand upon particulars, he is altogether from top to toe amiable, lovely and delectable.

He is alsogether lovely.

Lovely to God, to us, to the foule; lovely to him that can best judge of levelinesse, the judgement of God I hope will goe currant with us, and what doth God the Father judge of Christ, This is my Beloved Sonne, he is the Son of Gods love, Col. 1.13. (as God cannot but love his own Image) He is lovely alfo as man, for he was pure and holy, lovely as Mediator by office, for he was anointed by God to conveigh the Fathers love to us, He mast needs be lovely in whom all others are loved, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, out of him I am well pleased with no body. And indeed he was filled with all graces that might make him lovely, all the treafures of wifedome are in him, and of his fulneffe we all receive grace for grace, he is made a ftorehouse of all that is good for us.

He is lovely to God in what foever he did, he carried himselfe lovely, and pleased his Father in all his doings and fufferings. God loved him especially, Because he was obedient even unto the death of the groffe; therefore God gave him a name above all names, that at the name of lefus every knee

Phil.2.

(hould

Sua.XVII

Angels they looke upon him with admiration, they attended him, and accounted it an honour to wait upon him, he is lovely to all above us, and shall he not be lovely to us?

Obiett.

But you will say, was be lovely when he was nailed on the crosse, hung between two theeves, when he wore a crowne of thornes, was whipped, laid groveling on the ground, when he sweat water and bloud, what lovelinesse was in him when he was laid in his grave?

Anjw.

Oh yes then he was most lovely of all tous, By how much the more be was abased for us, this makes him more lovely, that out of love be would abale himselfe so low. When greatnesse and goodnesse meet together, bom goodly is it. That Christ fo great a Majety should have such bowels of compasfion. Majefty alone is not lovely, but awefull and fearefull, but joyned with fuch condescending grace is wondrous amiable. How lovely a fight is it to fee fo great a person to be so meeke and gentle : it was so beyond comparison, lovely in the eyes of the Disciples, that they stood and wondred to fee him who was the eternall word of the Father condescend to talke with a poore Samaritan woman: And what loveline ffe of carriage was in him to Peter undeferving after he had denied and forfworne him, yet to reftore him to his former place that he had in his heart, loving him as much as ever he did before. In a word, what sweetnesse, gentlenesse, bowelsof meekneffe, pitty and compaffion, did he discover to those that were in misery, we cannot infift SER.XVII

upon particulars.

There is a remarkable passage in the story of Alphon(se the King (net very well liked of some) when he faw a poore man pulling of his beaft out of a ditch he put to his hand to help him, after which, as it is recorded, his subjects ever leved him the better, it was a wonderfull condefcending, and is it not as wonderfull that the King of Heaven and Earth should stoop so low as to help us poore wormes out of the ditch of hell and damnation, and that when he hath fet us ina state of deliverance, he should not leave us there, but advance us to fuch a state and condition as is above our admiration, which neither heart can conceive, nor tongue expresse, is not this wonderfull condescending.

That we may further improve this point, Is Christ altogether lovely, so lovely to us, and so beloved of God the Father ? Let us then reft upon his obedience and righteousnesse, build upon it that God cannot refuse that righteousseffe, whose subject is altogether lovely. Let us come clothed in the garments of our elder brother, and then doubt not of acceptance; for it is in Christ that he loves us, in this welbeloved Sonne it is that God is well pleased with us : If we put on Christs Righteousnesse, wee put on Gods Righteoulneffe, and then how can God hate us, no more then he hates his owne Sonne; nay he loves us, and that with the fame love wherewith he loves him, for he loves whole Christ mysti- Iohn 17.23.

Bb 4

That Christ le fuch a Mediator as can quit ble office.

call,

Six.XVII call, head and members. Let this strengthen our Faith, that if Christ be so altogether lovely in himselfe and to the Father, then we may comfortably come before the Father, clothed with the garments of him our elder brother, and fo rest our selves on the acceptation of his Mediation that is so beloved a Mediator.

U/c 2. To labour to be in Chrift, that fo we may bee lovely before God

Againe, if Christ be so lovely (altogether lovely) then let us labour to be in him, that fo we may be lovely to God, because he is the first amiable thing in the world, in whom wee are all lovely, all our lovelineffe is in beloved Chrift.

Use 3. To fee then bor and whereupon to frend our beft affections.

Againe, if Christ be so lovely, here onely we have whereupon to fpend the marrow of our best affections. Is it not pitty wee should lose fo much of our affections as we doe upon other things, Christ is altogether lovely, why should we dote upon other things fo much, and fet up Idolsin our hearts above Chrift! Is healtogether lovely, and shall not behave altogether our lovely affections, especially when we are commanded under paine of a curfe to love the Lord Jefos. Anathema Maranatha to those that love not Chrift. Let ustherefore labour to place all our fweet affections that are to be exercised upon good, as love, joy, and delight, upon this object, this lovely deferving object Christ, who is alsogether lovely. When we fuffer a pure streame as it were so run through a dirty channell, our affecti-ons to run after the things of the world, which are worfethen our felves, we lofe our affections and our felves.

Cor 16.82.

SBR.XVII

The way not to lofe our affetti-

Let therefore the whole streame of our affections be carried unto Christ. Love him and whatfoever is his for he being altogether lovely, all that comes from him is lovely, his promifes, his directions, his counsels, his children, his Sacraments are all lovely. Wharfoever hath the stamp of Christ upon it, let us love it, we cannot bestow our hearts better, to lose our felves in the love of Christ, and to forget our selves and the love of all, yea to hate all in comparison of him, and to account all dung and droffe compared with Christ, is the only way to find our felves. And indeed we have a better condition in him then in the world or in our felves : levered from him, our condition is vaine and will come to nothing ; but that we have in him is admirable & everlatting, we cannot conceive the happinesse which we poore wretches are advanced to in Christ, and what excellent things abide for us which come from the love of God to us in Christ, who is fo altogether levely. Therefore let us labour to kindle in our hearts an affection towards Christ, all that we can, confidering that he is thus lovely.

And let us make an Use of Tryall, whether he be thus levely to us or no, we may see hence whether we love Christ or no, We may judge of our love by our esteeme. How doe we value Christ what price doth the Church set on him: Hee is the chiefe of ten thousand. What place then should be have in our hearts? If he

Whether or no Christ be thus lovely to us.

By our efteem

SER.XVII

Pfal.73.

be the chiefe of ten thousand, let us rather offend ten thousand then offend him. Let us say with David, whom have I in Heaven but thee, &c. And when the soule can say to Christ or any that is Christs (for I speake of him in the latitude of his Truths, Promises, Sacraments, and Communion with his Children) What have I in Heaven but thee, &c. then it is in a happy condition. If these things have the same place in our esteeme, as they have in respect of their owne worth, then we may say truly without hypocrisse, He u altogether lovely to us, that we truly love him.

By our fuffe- Ch

By our fufferings for Cbrift.

In the next place, are we ready to fuffer for Christ : We see the Church here endures any thing for Christ, she was misused of the watchmen, they scorned her, and her vaile is taken away, yet notwithstanding shee loves Christ still. Doe we stand ready disposed to suffer for Christ, of the world to be difgraced and cenfured, and yet are wee resolved not to give over, may doe we love Christ the more, and flicke to his truth the fafter ? Certainly where the love of Christ is, there is a spirit of Fortitude, as we may fee in the Church here, who is not discouraged from Christ by any meanes, he is still the chiefe of ten thousand, when the was wronged for feeking after him, yet hee was altogether lovely, whereas on the other hand, you have some that for frownes of greatnesse, feare of losse, or for hope of rising, will warp their conscience and doe any thing. Where

Where now is love to Christ and to Religi- Sun XVII on . He that loves Chrift loves him the more for his croffe, as the Holy-Ghoft hath recorded of fome, that they rejoyced that they were thought worthy to fuffer for Christ. So the more we fuffer for him, the more deare he will be to us. For indeed he doth present himselfe in love and comfort most to those that suffer for his fake, therefore their love is increafed.

Againe, where love is, there it enlargeth the heart, which being enlarged enlargeth the tongue alfo. The Church hath never cough of commending Christ, and of fetting at his praise, the tongue is loofed, because the heart is loofed. Love will alter a mans disposition, as we fee in experience, a man bale of nature, Love will make him liberall, he that is tonguetied, it will make him eloquent, let a man love Christ, and though before he could not speake a word in the commendation of Christ, and for a good cause, yet (I say) if the love of Christ be in him, you shall have him speake and labour earnestly in the praises of God. This hot affection, this heavenly fire, will fo mould and alter him, that he shall be cleane another man, as wee fee in the Church here, after that there was kindled a spirit of love in her, the cannot have done with Christ, when the had spoke what the could, the adds, be is altogether levely. Those that cannot speake, of Christ, or for Christ with large hearts in defence

tongue in the praies of Chrift

Sxx.XVII

fence of good causes (but are tongue-tied and cold in their affections) where is their love; put any worldly man to a worldly theamethat he is exercised in, and speaks of daily, he hath wit and words at will, but put him to a theame of piety, you lose him, he is out of his theame, and out of his element. But ris not so with those that have ever felr the love of God in Christ, they have large affections: How full is Saint Paul, he cannot speake of Christ but he is in the height, breath, length, and depth of the love of of God in Christ, and the knowledge of God above all knowledge: Thus we may discerne the truth of our love by the expressions of it here, as in the Church.

True love is never at reft till me find Christ.

til BRIGHT

Againe, the Church here is never content till the find Chrift, whatfoever she had, nothing contents her, she wanted her beloved, as we see here, she goes up and downe inquisitive after him till she find him: so it is with a Christian, if he have lost (by his owne fault) his former communion with Christ, he will not rest nor be satisfied, but searcheth here and there in the use of this and that meanes, hee runs through all Gods Ordinances and means till he find Christ, nothing in the world will content him, neither honour, riches, place, or friends, till he find that which he once enjoyed, but hath now for a seafon lost, the comfort and assurance of Gods love in Christ.

That contentment without Heavens fweet report of comfort to the foule is a dangerous condition.

Now if we can fit downe with otherthings, and can want Christ and the assurance of salva-

tion,

tion, that sweet report of the Spirit, that we SER.XVII

A figure of true flaming love to Chrift.

are his, and yet be contented well enough, here is an ill figne, that a man is in an ill condition, the Church was not so disposed here, she was never quiet, nor gives over her inquifition and speaking of Christ, that by speaking of the object, the might warme her affections, untill at the last she meets with Christ, these and the like signes there are of the truth of the love of Christ. But wherethere is a flaming love of Christ, there is this degree further, a defire of the appearance of Christ, a defire of his prefence : For if Christ be so lovely in his Ordinances: If wee finde fuch fweetnesse in the Word and Sacraments, in the communion of Saints, in the motions of the Spirit. What is the fweetnesse (thinke you) which the soules in Heaven enjoy, where they see Christ face to face, fee him as he is ! hereupon the Spoufe faith, Let him kiffe me with the kiffes of his mouth : O that I might live in his presence, this is the defire of a Christian Soule. When the flame of love is kindled in any strength, O that I might fee him, and therefore it longs even for death; for as farre as a man is spirituall, he defires to be diffolved, and to be with Christ. as Simeon, when he faw him (though in his abasement) Now I have enough, let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have feen thy falvation. The presence of Christ (though it were but in the wombe) when Marythe mother of Christ came to Elizabeth, it cansed the Babel

SEE XVII Babe that was in her wombe to fpring. Such comfort there is in the presence of Christ (though he be but in the wombe) as it made John to fpring. What then shall be his presence in H aven, how would it make the heart fpring there thinke you ? For that which is most lovely in Christ is to come. Therefore the Saints that have any degree of grace in the New Testament, they are set out by this description, they were fuch as loved the appearing of our Lord Iefus Chrift: how can it be otherwife if they love Christ, they love the appearing of Christ, wherein we shall be made lovely, as he is lovely.

That our many infirmities and fins Should make us long for that time whereimpe Shall be altogether lovely. To try our offections by the Churches affections.

Here we are not altogether lovely, for we. have many dregs of finne, many infirmities and staines, shall we not then defire that time wherein as he is altogether lovely, so shall wee be made a fit Spouse for so glorious a husband.

To conclude this point, let us try our affections by the Churches affections in this place. whether Christ be so lovely to us or not, Ifa. 50. it is feid there is no beauty in him, when we shall see him, and he was despised of men, hee was fo in regard of his croffe, and fufferings to the eye of the world, and of carnall men. Herod scorned him when Pilat sent him to him, made no body of him (as the word in the Originall is) they looked upon the outfide of Christ in the flesh when he was abafed. There was no forme nor beauty in him (faith the Holy-Ghoft) that is to the fight of carnall

men;

men ; but those that had the fight of their SEE.XVII finnnes with spirituall eyes, they could otherwife judge of Christ. The poore Centurion. faw an excellency in him, when he faid, Hee was not worthy that hee should come under his roofe. The poore theefe faw the excellency of Christ upon the Crosse in those torments, Lord remember me when thou commest into thy Kingdome -

So those soules that were enlightened, that had the fight of their mifery, and the fight of Gods love in Christ, had a high esteeme of Christ in his greatest abasement ; therefore if we have a meane efteeme of the children of God as contemptible perfons, and of the Or dinances of God as meane things, and of the government of Christ (such as he hath left in his word) as base, it is an argument of a sinfull unworthy disposition in such a soule. Christ hath never been effectually by his Spirit; for every thing in him is lovely, even the bitterest thing of all. There is a majesty and excellency in all things of Christ, the censures of the Church are excellent, when they proceed and iffue forth with judgement, as they should doe. to deliver fuch a man over to Satan, that hee may be faved in the day of the Lord.

Now if the Ordinances of Christ, the Word and Sacraments, and the shutting sinners out of the Church, if these things be vilified as powerleffe things, it shewes a degenerate wicked heart, not acquainted with the waves of

God.

SER.XVII God. If we have a meane efteeme of men that fuffer for Christ, and stand our for him : If we account them fo and fo, shall we thinke our felves Christians in the mean time; when Christ is altogether lovely, shall they bee unlovely that carry the Image of Christ ? Can we love him that begets and hate them that are begotten of him ? Can we love Christ and hate Christians ? it cannot be.

How to get an efteeme of Christ.

To make fin bitter.

Quest

Anfw.

To attend on the meanes of Calvation.

Now that wee may get this affection and esteeme of Christ that is so lovely. Let us labour to make our finnes bitter and loathfome, that Christ may be sweet.

What is the reason we set no higher a price of

Chrift ?

Because we judge not of our selves, as we are indeed, and want spirituall eye-salve to see into

our felves rightly.

Andlet us attend upon the meanes of falvation, to heare the unsearchable riches of Christ. What makes any man lovely to us? but when we heare of their riches, beauty, and good intent to us. In the Word we are made acquainted with the good intent of Christ towards us, the riches of mercy in forgiving our finnes, and riches of glory prepared for us : The more we heare of him, of his riches and love to us, the more it will inflame our love to Chrift. Those that live where the Ordinances of Christ are held forth with life and power, they have more heavenly and enlarged affections then others have, as the experience of Christians will restifie.

Againe,

To joyne with fuch company as highly efteeme of Christ.

Againe, if we would efteeme highly of Christ SER.XVII that he may be lovely to us, let us joyne with company that highly esteeme of Christ, and fich as are better then our felves. What deads the affections so much as carnall, worldly company, who have nothing in them but civility, by converse with them who have discourse of nothing but the world: If a man have heavenly affections, he shall quickly dull them, and be in danger to lose them : they may be converfed with in civill things; but when we would fer to be heavenly, and holy minded, let us converse with those that are of an heavenly bent ; as we fee here, The daughters of Ierufales are won to love Christ ? by what ? By converfing with the Church, upon the discourse that the Church makes of his excellencies in particular, they begin to aske where is Christ? as in the next Chapter, and fo are all brought to the love of Christ.

> must Ce ancio spece weens contra a

cetions: but looke on him setode. old and topped are decrease ner

Culeren

SER.XVII



The eighteenth Sermon.

CANT. V. XVI.

His mouth is most sweet, yea he is altogether lovely, this is my Beloved, and this is my friend, o daugh. ters of Ierufalem.

CANT. VI. L. II.

Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women, whither is thy Beloved turned afide that we may feeke bim with thee.

My Beloved is gone downe, &c.



Y this time the Church hath well quit her felfe in that fafe fubject, commending her Beloved, first in generall, and then in particular; the affirmes (in effect) there was none

like him in generall, which the after makes good in all the particulars of her description, now she fummes up all with a kinde of fuperaboundant expression. What Shall I say more of him? if that which is said be not enough then know further, heis altogether lovely, there were no end to goe through all his perfections; but looke on him wholly, he is altogether lovely, and therefore deferves my love ; fo

that there is no cause why you should wonder at the SER XVIII Arength of my affections, and care to find out this my Beloved and this my friend, O ye daughters of Ieru. falem. Thus we fee how the pirch of an enlightened foule is bent, it aspires to things sutable to its felte, to Godward, to union and communion with Christ, to supernaturall objects, nothing here below is worthy the name of its beloved. It fastens not on earthly base things, but this is my beloved, and this is my friend, this so excellent a person, this Iedidiah, this beloved sonne, this ludge of all, Lord of all, this chiefe of ten thousand; Here the Church pitches her affecti. ons, which the conceales not as afhamed thereof. but in a kind of triumphing, boafting of her choice, the concludes all with a kind of resolute assurance, that the object of this her choice is far beyond all comparison.

This is my Beloved and this is my friend, a daugh-

ters of terufalem.

Which is the clofing up of her commendations of Christ, This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, &c. Which shall only be touched, because we had occasion to speake thereof before. She cals Christ her beloved, how soever he had withdrawne himselfe in regard of the comfort and communion the had with him before, yet be is her beloved still.

That which is specially to be stood upon, is, that the Church here doth fet out not only in parcels, but in generall her beloved Christ : this is my Beloved, shee doth as it

Cc 2

Objerv.

were boast in her Beloved: whence observe A Christian Soule seemes to glory as it werein Christ.

Divers ends why the Church thus in general and particular fets forth the excellency of Christ. This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, to ye daughters of Ienufalem: But to unfold more fully this point, there be three or four ends why the Church thus stands upon the expressing of the excellencies of Christ in particular and in generall.

To show kow just it is to respect so excellent a person.

The one, To show that it is most just that she should love and respect him in whom there is all this to deferve love, both in himselfe, in regard of his owne excellencies, so, and in relation to me in regard of his merits and deserts.

To justifie ber strong affection to the stronger Christians,

Secondly, To justifie her large affections before the world and all opposites: For the world thinks, what meanethele who are called Christians to haunt the exercises of Religion, to spend to much time in good things, they wonder at it for want of better information; Now the Church here to justifie her large expressions, sayes, this is my Beloved, this is my friend, O je daughters of Ierusalem.

To boaft and glory in God.

And not only to justifie, but likewise to glory therein, as you have it, Pfal. 4.2.8. the Church there boasts of God, I will make my boast of thee all the day long. So that Christians may not onely justifie their course of life against enemies, but in some four boast of Christ, as Paul oft doth, and he shewes the reason of it, that God hath made Christ to usall in all, wissome jrighteousnes, sandiscation, and redemption, that who so ver glorieth

rieth might glory in the Lordsfor is it not a mat. SER. XVIII ter of glorying in the Church when she hath fuch a head and fuch a husbande This is my beloved, the wife shines in the beames of her husband, therefore this yeelds matter not onely of

instification but of glory.

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And next in the fourth place, the Church is thus large and shuts up all with a repetition, this is my beloved. To enlarge ber owne affections, and to feed her owne love. For love feeds upon this fuell (as it were) upon expressions and meditations of the person or thing loved. Love is as it were wages of it felfe, the paines it takes is gaine to it felfe, to the Church here it is an argument pleafing, the dilates upon a copious Theame. I may muly fay there is no greater comfort to a Christian, nor a readier way to enlarge the affections after Christ, then to speake oft of the excellencies of Christ, to have his tongue as the pen of a ready writer furnished this way, This is my Belo. ved. &c.

In the fifth place, another end of this may be to aggravate her owne shame, as indeed Gods children are much in this argument, that upon their second thoughts of Christs worthinesse, and therewithall reflecting upon their owne unworthineffe and unkindneffe they may rellish Christ the better. Therefore the Church here that it might appeare to her leffe for her humiliation how unkind the had bin to thut the doore against Christ when he knocked, whereupon he defervedly did withdraw himfelfe and made her feek To enlarge ber owne affettions

That love is wages to it felf.

To oggravate ber owne fhame and unkindne fo in fo fleighting Christs love.

Cc 3

him

Sax XVIII him fo long forrowing, Itell you fayes the what akind of beloved he is, thus and thus excellent. How did the confideration of Gods kindneffe and love melt Davids heart after that horrible finne in the matter of Priah, and the fweet looks of Christ upon Peter, that had been so unkinde. melted him. So here the Church when the con. fidered how unkind the had been to Christ her beloved, so incomparably excellent above other beloveds, to let him flandarthe doore, till his lockes were wet with the dew of the night. The confideration hereof made her ashamed of her felfe: what fo excellent, fo deferving a perfon as my beloved isto me, to be used of me for what indignity is this? Thus to raise up the aggravation of her unkindnesse, no question but the Church takesthis courfe for Gods children are not as unroward worldlings and hypocrites, afraid to fearch and to understand themselves. the childe of God loves to be well read in his owne heart and unworthy wayes; therefore he laves all the blame he can upon himselfe every way, he knowes he lofeth nothing by this; for there is more mercy in Christthen there is finne in him, and the more finne abounds in his owne feeling, the more grace shall abound, he knowes the mystery of Gods carriage in this kind. Therfore for this end (amongst the rest) she faves, This is my Beloved, and shis is my friend, whom I have fo unkindly used.

To wind up the affections of ber ew beginning Christians.

And the last reason why the Church is thus large was, To draw and wind up the affections of

those

these well meaning Christians that were commers on, who were inquisitive of the way to Zion. O ye daughters of Ierusalem, that you may know that there is some cause to seeke after Christ more then you have done before: I tell you what an excellent person my beloved is, to whet their affections more and more: And wee see the successe of this excellent discourse in the beginning of the next Chapter, Whether is thy Beloved gone, &c.

These and the like reasons there are of the large expressions of the Church of the excellencies of Christ, This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, Oh ye daughters of Iernsalem. But wee will single out of these reasons for Use that which I thinke sittest for us to make Use of

Let us then off thinke of the excellencies of Christ for this end, to justifie our endeavours and paines we take in the exercises of Religion, and to justifie Gods people from the false imputations of the world that they lay upon them, as if they were negligent in other matters, and were too much busied in spiritual things. You see how large the Church is in setting out the excellencies of her Beloved, and then she shuts up all (being able to say no more) justifying our cause, This is my Beloved, or this is my friend. Do you wonder that I seeke so much after him then: or wonder you at Christians, when they take such paines to keep their communion with Christ in a holy walking with, and depending upon God. These

San.XVIII

are no wonders, if you confider how excellent Christ is, what he hath done for us, and what he keeps for us in another world, that he will preferve us to his heavenly kingdome, till he pur us into possession of that glorious condition that he hath purchased. Let the hearts of men dwell upon the confideration of these things, and then you shall see that Gods children are rather to be blamed that they are no more carefull, watchfull, and industrious, then to be taxed that they are fo much. Our Saviour Christ faid, Mat. 11. 19. Wisedome is justified of all her children. If you will make good that you are children of wisedome, you must be able to justifie the wife. dome of God every way, to justifie your reading hearing, your communion of Saints, to justificall the exercises of Religion from an experimentall tafte and sweetnesse of them (as the Church doth here) This is my Beloved. What faves Iohnah, this choice I have made, doe you what you will it matters me not, but I and my house will serve the Lord. So Paul makes a voluntary profession of his affection, Rom, 1.2. I am not ashamed of the Gospell of Iesus Christ, let the Gospell be entertained in the world as it will, and let others thinke of me as they will, that I am forward in the preaching of it, I am nor assumed of it, and good reason he had not to be ashamed, for it is the power of God to falvation to all that believe, yeathe faving power to us, and have not I cause to fland in the defence of it; and so he faith the 2 Tim. 1.12 .I know whom I have beleeved &c. I am

Iofb-14-15.

Mat. 11.19.

2 Tim 1.11.

i wors Din to Heate Hall by

Wood &

not ashamed to suffer bonds for his sake. Though San XVIII the world thought him a meane perfon, I will not be fcomed out of my Faith and Refigion by shallow empty persons, that know not what Christ and Religion meaneth. No. I know whom I have beleeved, he is able to keep that that I have committed to him against that day. Let us theretore be able to justifie from a judicious apprehension fweet divine truths. You fee what justifications there are of the Church of God: Wherefore Should the Heathen fay, where is now their God ? and Pfalme 42.10. Oh it went to Davids heart, when they faid where is now their God & what is become of his God when he was left in trouble, as the Church here, and what doth the answer? doth he let it goe with a question? No sayes he, our God is in Heaven and bath done whatfoever he pleased.

And this justification of Religion you may know by this figne, it is with the difertion of all discourses opposite to Religion whatsoever, he that justifies the truth, he esteemes meanly of other courses and discourses. Therefore in the next verse the Church vilifies the Idols, our God is in Heaven, and doth whatfoever he pleafether the Idols are filver and gold, the worke of mens hands, they have eyes and fee not, cares and heare not. And the more we justifie Christ. the more we will be against Antichrist and his Religion, we may know the owning of the one truth by the vilifying the other. Let us labour therefore to grow to fuch a convincing know-

Pfal-113.3.

Met Bair ST mirle Spirit

Redelators

The justificati on of religious endeavours with difertion of opposite cour fes.

and middled

69.30

ledge

SIN.XVIII

ledge of Christ, the good things in him, and the wayes of God, as we may be able to stand our against all opposition of the gates of hell what-soever.

To grow to know Christ more, and bu good things, we must grow in admiration of them.

And to this end proceed in the study of Christ, and to a deeper search of him, and of the excellencies and good things in him, that we may say as Micab 7. Who is a God like to thee, that pardons since and iniquities: And as David, Pfal. 173. Who is a God like our God that humbleth himselfe to behold the things done here below.

We must pray for the Spirit of Revelation.

of position

And defire also to this purpose the Spirit of revelation, that which Paul prayes for, Ephes. 1, and Cap. 3. that we may know that knowledge that is above all knowledge, the height, depth, and breadth of Gods love in Christ. So sweet is God in the greatest abasements of his children, that he leaves such a taste in the soule of a Christian, that from thence he may be able to say, this is my beloved, when his beloved seems not to care for him. When the Church seemed to be diffespected and neglected of Christ, yet the sayes, This is my Beloved, and thurs my friend, 0 yet dane there of servalem.

That if worldly and wicked men boaft of east bly things, much more ought we of our portion in Christ.

Pfal. 93.1.

Shall rich men boast of their riches; shall men that are in favour boast of the favour of great perfons; shall a man that hath large possessions boast and thinke himselfe as good and as great as his estate is; shall a base minded worldling be able to boast. Why boastest thoushy felf, Oh mighty man; Nay you shall have malignant spirited men

boaft

can doe this and that mischiese, shall a man boast of mischiese that he is able to doe mischiese; and hath not a Christian more cause to boast in God and in salvation? Lord shine on me sayes David, let me enjoy the light of thy countenance.

and that shall bring me more joy then they have, when their come and wine increased: know this as he goes on in the same Pfalme, that God

Therefore let us thinke we have much more

cause to boast of God and of Christ in a spiritu-

all maner; then the worldling hath of the world. Is not God and Christ our portion? and having Christ, have we not all things with Christ? put case all things be tooke from us, if a man have

Christ, he is rich though he have nothing elseuf

he have all without him, His plenty is (252 Fa-

ther faith, and as it is in truth) beggery. But

who oever hath Christ may thus rejoyce with

David, The lot is fallen to me in pleasant places, year I have a goodly heritage. Would ye have more then God in Christ, a Ring with a Diamond very precious in it. Now the Daughters of Iernfalem hearing this large expression of affection.

That grace shough it be in the confoliation reper

aske, and adol vantow stell once of

accepts the righteous man.

Pfal 4 7.

That Christ reconciled is the best portion.

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CHAP.

but leaden al great the first is greating fill.

SER XVIII

CHAP. VI. I.

Whisher is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aside that we may Jocke him with thee?

bear of ante could



Ere is another Question, the first which the daughters of Ierusalem aske is, what is thy Beloved: Where upon the Church tooke occasion to expresse what her beloved was,

upon her expression closing up all with this generall, This is my Beloved, and this is my friend.

That a discovety of Christs ex cellencie must needs set m a morke how to have him. Then the second Question is, Whither is thy Beloved gone? One question begets another, and indeed it this question be well satisfied what is Christ above others, this will follow againe, where is he? how shall I get him? how shall I seeke him? what is the reason this second question is seldome made? Whither is he gone? how shall I get Christ? Because the former question, namely, What is Christ? is so seldome made: For if we did once know what Christ is, we would be sure with the danghers of sernsalem to aske whither is he gone, that we may seeke him with thee.

Observ.
That grace begets grace, the Disame oncekind learne, That but he aburning and growing.

We see here is a growth in the desires of the Daughters of Ierusalem, whence wee

That grace, though it be in never fo little proportion at the first, it is growing still.

From

Here is a second (upon better information)

You

Whither is thy Beloved gone, that we may feeke him with thee? Nothing is leffe then grace at the first, nothing in the world fo little in proportion. The Kingdome of Heaven is compared to a graine of Mar, 13. mustard-feed, that is, the worke of grace in the heart, as well as in the preaching of the Gofpell, in the beginning is little. It is true of the worke of grace, as well as of the word of grace, that it is like a graine of mustard-feed at first. What is thy Beloved enquires the Church at first but when the heares of the excellency of Christ, then whither is thy Beloved gone ? Grace begers grace, there is a connexion and knitting together in Religion, good things beget good things: It is a strange thing in Religion, how great a matter ariseth of a little beginning. The woman of Samaria had but a small beginning of grace, and ver the prefently drew many of her neighbours to beleeve in Christ. So Andrew, John 1. As loone as he was converted he finds his brother Simon and rels him that he had found the Mesi. and fo brings him to Christ; and Philip as foon as he had got a sparke of Faith himselfe, hee drawes also Nathaniell to come to Christ, Paul speaks of his bonds, how the noise of them was in Cafars. Court, and many believed the very report, which howfoever it is not a working cause, yet it may be a preparing, inducing, leading cause to fuch things from one thing to another, till there follow this change and full convertion

Sun.XVIII
An error of the
Papifts touching the efficacy
of grace in congraity.

That the means without a difinit confifting worke can doe nothing.

Dent. 29.4.
That ufually
God works
with the meant

You fee here the daughters of Ierufalem growing; therefore let us labour to be under good meanes. Some of the Romists and others which ate ill affected and grounded in that point, they thinke that the efficacy of grace is, as we call it from the congruity, fitnesse, and proportion of the meanes to the heart and will of man, and thereupon God converts one and not another, because there is a congruous and fit offering of meanes to him, when he is fitly disposed, and another is not fiely disposed; therefore there followes nor upon it effectuall calling, fo that the vertue of the meanes offered depends upon futablenesse and firnesse in the party to whom the means are offered, and not upon the power and bleffing of God, verily this is plaufible, and goes downe very roundly with many weake persons; but this is a falle and a groffe errour; for unleffe God by his holy Spirit doe worke by the meanes, no plan-ting and watering will bring any increase and change the heart and mind, though there were greater means in Christs time, when he wrought these miracles then any time before, yet all those could not convert that froward generation: And ir was Mofes complaint in the wilderneffe, where they had abundance of meanes, God hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to fee, and eares to heare untill this day. When a man is planted under good meanes, and frequents them, then ordinarily it pleafeth God by the inward workings of his owne powerfull Spiritto worke great matters; and those that keep out of Gods reach.

reach, that will not come into places where they may heare good things, there is no hope of them, though there be many ill fish in the net, yet there is no hope to catch them that are without the net. So those that are kept out of all opportunities and occasions whereby Gods Spirit may worke upon them, there is no hope of them.

Let us learne this heavenly wisedome to advantage our selves this way, by improving all good opportunities whatsoever whereby wee may learne, for God works by outward meanes: good company, and good discourse, these breed excellent thoughts. As therefore we love our soules, take all advantages wherein the Spirit of God works, we shall find incredible fruit theros, more then we would believe. But to come to the Ouestion.

See here first of all in this Question, the blessed successe of the Churches enquiry after Christ in the daughters of serulatem; after they heard the large expications of the excellencies of Christ, especially by the Church, whom they had a good conceit of, for they call her, the fairest among women.

And freing likewise the confidence of the Church, she stands to it, this is my Beloved, yea also eagernesse in the Church to seeke after him, they would seeke him with her, so that where these meet, a large unfolding of the truth of God, and that by persons that are knowne to be good, well accepted and conceited of, and where

That demonstrative affects on are confident explication of Christ, is never without won drown fuccesses

SIR.XVIII

where there is a large demonstration of reals affection, and the things are spoken of with confidence, as knowing what they say, the word (Isay) to mannaged, it is never without wondrous successes.

For in the course of reason, what can I have to say, considering the person who speaks is an excellent person, he is wiser and holier then I, he takes to heart these things, and shall not I affect that which those that have better parts and graces doe?

Then withall I fee not onely excellent perfons doe it, but I fee how earnest they are, surely there is some matter in it; for persons so holy, so wise, and gracious to be so earnest, surely either they are too blame, or I am too dull and too dead, but I have most eause to suspect my selfe.

And to feethem carried with a fpirit of confidence, as if they were well enough advised when they deliver this (this is my Beloved) in particular, and then to first up all in generall, This is my Beloved, and this is my friend: I say, when there is grace and life in the heart, and earnest nesses with confidence, this together with the explication of the heavenly excellencies of Christ, and of Religion, it hath admirable successes, as here in the Church, the fairest among women, the daughters of Ierusalem, seeing the Church was so carnest, consider and so large in the explication of the excellencies of Christ, see how it works, it drawes our this Question with resolution, they joyne

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SER-XVIII

How to be bappy infruments to convert others

To be fuch an the world may thinke to bee good and gracious.

To be earnest in those things we would inforce upon others,

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joyne with the Church in feeking Christ. Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy Beloved turned afide, that we may feeke bim with thee ? Where by the way obferve as the Church before doubles it, This is my Beloved and this is my friend fo they answer with adouble question, Whither is thy Beloved gone? whither is he turned aside, O thou fairest among wemen,&c. From this appellation note, If we would be happy instruments to convert others, being converted our felves, labour to be fuch as the world may thinke to be good and gracious, O then fairest among women: Faire in the robes of Christ tooke our of his wardrobe .: All the beauty and ornaments that the Church hath, thee hath from Chrift, let us labour to be fuch as the world may conceirare good persons. We fay of Physitians, when the patient hath a good conceit of them the cure is halfe wrought: So the Doctrine is half perswaded, when there is a good conceit of the beaker.

Againe, labour to be earnest. If wee would kindle others, we must be warmed our selves: If we would make others weep, we must weep our selves. Naturalists could observe this, the Church spake this with large expressions, indeed more then can be exprest. Let us labour to be deeply affected with what we speake, and speake with considence, as if we knew what we spoke, as the Apostle Iohn doth in the beginning of his Epistle to bring others to be better perswaded of his Doctrine: He affirment that which was

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from

SER XVIII

from the beginning, which we have heard which we have feen with these our eyes, which we have looked upon, and these hands of ours have handled of the Word of Life he delivered to them.

2 Pet.1-16.

For when we are confident from spirituall experience, it is wonderfull how we shall be instruments of God to gaine upon others. So Peter, we followed not (sayes he) deceivable sables, when we opened unto you the power and comming of our Lord Iesus Christ, but with our eyes we saw his Majesty.

Doe not thinke it belongs onely to the Ministery, there is an art of Conversion that belongs to every one that is a growne Christianto

win others.

Whither u thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?

The next observation out of the words (because it is the especials) which works upon the daughters of Ierusalem, is from the large explication of Christ.

Objerv.

That which most of all stirs up holy affections to search after Christ is the large explication of his excellencies.

That we eaght to bee in love with the miniflery of the word, whereby the excellency of Christ is fet forth.
Prov. 10 10.

Then be in love with the Ministery of the Gospell, and the Communion of Saints, who have their tongues and their hearts taught of God to speake excellently, their tongues are as refined silver, their hearts are enriched to increase the communion of Saints. Markethis one excellency of that excellent ordinance of God

SER.XVIII

That because the Beciall office of the ministery is to unfold Chrift, therefore all our di courfe foould tend this way in fome fort.

in Christ, whereof Paul faith, Ephef. 3. To me is committed this excellent office to lay open the unfearchable riches of Christ, such riches as may draw you to wonder, fuch as eye hath never feene, nor care heard, nor hath entred into the heart of man to conceive, and so to draw the affections of peo-

ple after them.

And because it is the speciall office of the Miniftery to lay him open, to hold up the tapiftry, to unfold the hidden mysteries of Christ, labour we therefore to be alway speaking somewhat about Christ or tending that way, when we speak of the Law, let it drive us to Chrift, when of Morall duties, to teach us to walke worthy of Christ, Christ, or somewhat tending to Christ should be our theame and marke to avme

Therefore what shall we judge of those that are hinderers of this glorious ordinance of Christ in the Gospell, they are enemies of conversion, and of the calling of Gods people, enemies of their comfort : and what shall we thinke of those wretched and miserable creatures, that like Cain are vagabonds, who wander and will not submit themselves to any ordinance meekly, but keep themselves out of this blessed opportunity of hearing the excellencies of Christ, which might draw their hearts to him : we are made forever, if Christ and we be one; if we have all the world without him it is nothing, if we have nothing in the world but Christ, we are happy. Oh happy then when this match is made

Dd 2

SER XVIII

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between Christ and the soule, the friends of the Bride and of Christ, they laying open the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Spoule, draw the affections, work faith, and so bring the Bride and the Bridegroome together.

Thus farre of the Question, now wee have the Churches answer to the daughters of Ierusa.

lem.

My Beloved is gone into his Garden, to the beds of Spices, to feed in the Gardens, and to gather Lillies.

The Question was not for a bare satisfaction, but from a desire the Church had to seek Christ, whither is thy beloved gone that we may seeke him. It was not a curious question, but a question of inquisition tending to practise. Many are inquisitive, but when they know another mans meaning, it is all they desire: now I know your meaning will they say, but I meane not to follow your counsell. The daughters of terusalem had a more sincere intention, o thou sairest among women, whither is thy beloved turned aside that we may seeke him with thee? whereunto the Church answered,

That there out to be no early in spiritual things which may infolidum be divided alike to all.

My Beloved is gone into his Garden to the heds of fices to feed in the Gardens, Where we lee,

The Church is not squemish, but directly answers to the question, for there is no envy in spiritual things, because they may be divided in solidam, one may have as much as another, and all alike. Envy is not in those things that are not divisible in other things, the more one hath,

another

another hath the leffe. But there is no envy in S ER XVIII grace and glory, because all may share alike therfore here is no envy in the answer; as if the denied the daughters of Irrufalem the enjoying of her beloved; no if you will know (layes she) I will tell you directly whither my beloved is gone.

My Beloved is gone into his Garden to the bed of

Bices &cc.

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God hath two gardens, the Church Catholike is his garden, and every particular Church are gardens and beds of spices, in regard that many Christians are sowne there that Christs foule delights in, as in fweet fpices. This was spoken of before at large in Chapter 5. 1. why the Church is called a garden being a severed place from the wast : the Church is severed from the wildernesse of the world in Gods care and love, likewise hee tends and weeds his Church and garden: as for the wast of the world, he is content the wildernesse should have barren plants : but he will not endure fuch in his garden; therefore those that give themselves liberty to be naught in the Church of God, he will have a time to root them out : Trees that are not for fruit, shall be for the fire, and above all other Trees their doome shall be the heaviest that grow in Gods garden without fruit, that fig-tree shall be curfed.

Men are pleased with answering the bill of accusation against them thus, are we not baptized? and doe we not come to Church ? &c. what doe

Luk 13. The folly and madnes of fucb who plead they are spices and plants of Gods garden whilest they live in all

рторвалене ве.

Heb.6, Deut. 31.32

Sux XVIII you make of us, yet they are abhominable fwearers and fifthy in their lives. To fach I fay, the more God hath lift you up, and ho. noured you in the use of the meanes, the more rust shall your damnation be, that you bring forth nothing but briers and brambles, the grapes of Sodome, and the vine of Gomerrah : heavy will the doome be of many that live in the Churches bosome, to whom it had been better to have been borne in America, in Turker, or in the most barbarous parts in the world: they have a heavy account to make that have beene such ill proficients under aboundance of meanes, therefore it ought to be taken to heart.

That Christ looks for Lillies to plant them in bis garden, de light in them, and transport them into Heaves.

Two Paradifes

My Belowed is gone into bis garden to the beds of spices , to feed in the Gardens , and to gather Lillies .

That is, having fielt planted them Lillies here, to gather them, and to transport them out of the garden here, to the garden in Heaven, wherethere shall be nothing but lillies. For the Church of God hath two Gardens or Paradifes fince the first Paradise (whereof that was a resemblance) the Paradife of the Church, and the Paradife of Heaven. As Christ faith to the good theefe, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. So those that are good plants in the Paradise of the Church, they shall be glorious plants also in the Paradise of Heaven: Wee must notalway be here, we shall change our foyle, and be taken into Heaven : He is gone into his Garden to gather Lillies.

Christians are compared to Lillies fortheir purity and whitenesse unspotted in justification, and for their endeavours in fanctity and holineffe, wherein also at length they shall be wholly unfpotted, it is the end (Epbef. 1.4.) they are chosen too, to be holy without blame before him in love. God and Christ looks upon them without blame, not as they are here defiled and spotted, but as they intend by little and little to purge and parific themselves by the Spirit that is in them, that they may be altogether without blame. They are Lillies being cloathed with the white garments of Christs righteousnesse, not having a naturall whiteneffe and purity: the whiteneffe and purity of Gods children is borrowed, all their beauty and garments are taken out of anothers wardrobe, the Church is all gloriour within; but the borrowes her glory, as the Moone borrowes all her light from the Sun : the

The Church before was likened to a garden culled ont, an Eden, a Paradife: Now there you know were foure streames, sweet and goodly rivers which watered Paradise, the heads of which rivers were without it. So the Church of God, her graces are her owne, that is, the Spirit of God comes through her nature, purgeth and purisher it; but the spring of those graces (as in Paradise) is out of her selfet.

Churches excellency is berrowed, it is her owne burby gift, but being once her owne it is her own

forever.

And then the Lilly is a tall goodly plant, ther-

SIR.XVIII

In what respects Christians are compared to Likies for purity, whiteness, and unspottedness.

Because it is a tall goodly

SIR XVIII

Dan.11,21.

fore the Church is compared to them. Other men are compared to thornes, not onely for a noxious, hurrfull quality in them, but for their basenesse likewise : What are thornes good for, but to cumber the ground, to eat out the heart of it, to hide Inakes, and for the fire. Wicked men are not Lillies but thornes, they are base meane persons. Antiochus is said to be a vile person though he were a King, because he was a naughty min. Wicked men though they be never fo great, being void of the grace of God are vile persons, though wee must respect them in regard of their places; yet as they are in their qualification, they are vile and base thorness but the Church is not fo, but as a Lilly among thornes, that is, among vile and abhominable perforis.

Use I. Comfort Gods children. The Use is to comfort Gods children, they have an excellency and glory in them, which howsoevers is not from them, yet it is theirs by gift and eternally theirs; therefore let them comfort themselves against all the censures of sinfull persons, that labour to trample them under soot, and thinke basely and meanly of them, as of the off-scowing of the world. Let the unworthy world thinke of them as they will, they are Lillies in Gods esteem, and are so indeed, glorious persons that have the Spirit of glory resting upon them, and whom the world is not worthy of, though their glory be within; therefore let us glory in it, that God vouchsafeth saving grace to us above any other priviledge.

1 Pet.4. Heb 1.1.

Againe,

My Beloved is gone into bis garden.

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Againe, it comforts us in all our wants what- SER.XVIII foever that God will take care for us : Christ ufeth this argument, God faith he, cloatheth the Lillies of the field with an excellent beauty, he cares even for the meanest plants, and will he not take care for you, o ye of little faith? Doth he care for Lillies that are to day, and to morrow are cast into the oven, and shall he not care for the Lillies of Paradife, the living Lillies, those holy reasonable Lillies ? undoubtedly he will. Our Saviour Christs reason is undeniable, he that purs fuch a beauty upon the poore plants that flourish

Ujez.

are compared to Lillies. To gather Lillies.

to day in the morning and wither before night, he that puts such a beauty upon the graffe of the field, will he not put more excellency upon his children ! will he not provide for them, feed them undoubtedly he will. Thus we have shewed why Gods children in the Church of God

Christ is faid to gather these Lillies, that is, he will gather shem together, Christ will not have his Lillies alone scattered, though hee leaves them of alone for a while, yet he will gather them to Congregations and Churches: the name of a Church in the Original is Ecclefia, it is no thing but a company gathered out of the world. Doe we thinke that we are Lillies by nature ? no we are thornes and briers, God make us Lillies, and then gathers us to other Lillies, that one may frengthen another. The Spirit of God in his children is not a Spirit of Separation of Christi-

That Christs Lillies Shall not bee (cattered, but be will gather them totber.

Sar.XVIII ans from Christians; but a spirit of separation from the wall wild wildernesse of the world; as we fay of fire, Congregat homogenea & diferegat beterogenea, it congregates all hemogenial things, as gold, which it gathers, but difgregates heterogeniall things, confameth droffe : fo the Spirit of God fevers thornes and gathers Lillies, gathers Christianstogether in the Church, and will gather them for ever in Heaven.

That the ifue of fruitfull conerence is gre at last, though beginning.

Thus we fee the answer of the Church to the daughters of Ierusalem, what it was, with the occa. fionthereofithe Question of the daughters of Ierufalem, whither is thy Beloved gone ? forhatthe Church was beholding to the daughters of Ieru. falem for ministring such a question to give her occasion to know better what her Beloved was: Indeed we many times gaine by weaker Christians; good questions, though from weake ones, minister sutable answers: It is a Greek Proverbe. that doubting begets plenty and abundance, for doubting at the first begets resolution at last. O that we could take occasion hence, to thinke of this, what excellent vertue is in the communion of Saints, when they meet about heavenly exercifes, what a bleffing followes, when though at the entry, their affections may be flar and dull, yet they part not fo, Christ heates and inflames their hearts to doe much good to one another. O those that shall for ever live together in Heaven, should they not delight to live more together on earth.

THE

SER.XIX.



The nineteenth Sermon.

CANT. VI. II.

I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies.



Hese words are a kind of triumphant acclamation upon all the former passages, as it were the foot of the Song, for when the Church had spoken formerly of her ill

dealing with Christ, and how he thereupon abfented himselfe from her, with many other passages, she shuts up at last with this, I am my Beloveds

andmy Beloved is mine.

Now the begins to feele fome comfort from Christ, who had estranged himselfe from her, O (saith she) notwithstanding all my sufferings, defertions, crosses, and the like, I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine. Words expressing the wondrous comfort, joy, and contentment, the Church now had in Christ, having her heart instanced with love unto him, upon his manifesting of himselfe to her soule, I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, he feedesh among the Littles.

There

SER.XIX.

There is a muruall intercourse and viciffitude of claiming interest betwixt Christ and his Church, I am Chrifts, and Clrift is mine, I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.

From the dependance and order of the words. comming in after a defertion for a while, ob-

ferve.

That Christ will not be long from his Church.

The spiritual desertions (for sakings as we use to call them) howfoever they be very irkefome to the Church (that loves communion with Christ) and to a loving soule, to be deprived of cannot be long the sence of her beloved; yet notwithstanding they are but short, Christ will not be long from his Church, his love, and her defire will not let him, they offer violence: why art thou abfent (fay they) why art thon so farre off, and hidest thy felfe ? Iofeph may conceale himfelfe for a space, but he will have much adoe fo to hold long, to be straightened to his brethren, passion will breake out. So Christ may seeme hard to be intreated, and to croffe his owne sweet disposition, as to the woman of Canaan, but he will not long keep at this diffance, he is soone overcome, O woman great is thy Faith, have what thou wilt, when the trove with him a little (as Faith is a friving grace) fee how the did win upon him. So the Angelland Jacob may Arive for a while, but Iacob at the length proves Ifrael, he prevailes with God. So it is with the Christian foule and Christ, howsoever there be desertion (for causes before mentioned) because the Church was neg-

ligent

Christ ablent from bis Church.

Objerv.

ligent (as we heare) and partly for the time to San. XIX. come, that Christ by his estrangement might sweeten his comming againe, howsoever there may be strangenesse for a time, yet Christ will returne againe to his Spoule.

The Use should be, not onely for comfort, to flay us in such times, but to teach us likewife to mait and never give over : If the Church had given over here, the had not had fuch gracious manifestations of Christ to her: learne hencetherefore this use, to wait Gods leifure. God will wait to doe good to them that wait on him : If we wait his leifure, he will wait an opportunity of doing good to us : When God feemes not to answer our prayers, let us yet wait, we shall not lofe by our tarrying, he will wait to doeus good.

In the next place observe after this temporary defertion, Christ visits his Church with more

abundant comfort then ever before.

Now the Church cannot hold, My Beloved is mine and I am his, and Christ cannot hold, but fals into a large commendation of his Spoufe backe againe; as the was large in his commendations, so he is large in hers, and more large, he will have the last word; therefore learne by this experience, that all things worke together for the beft to them that love God: all things. What evill ? levill; why even fin turnes to their humiliation, yea & defertion(those spirituall ils)turns to their good of for Christ feemes to forfake for a while that he may come after with more abundance of

Ule.I. Confolation to (upp .rt us in defirtion.

Ifa, 30.18.

That we lofe nothing by our largene fe of af. Jeftion to Chrift for bis returne to ours is exceeding ours.

Rom. 8. 28.

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TY VIV

comfort, when once he hath enlarged the foule before with a spacious defire of his comming to fay, O that he would come, when the foulers thus stretched with defire in the sence of want. then he fils it againe till it burft forth, My Beloved is mine, and I ambis. It was a good experiment of Bernard an holy man in ill times, tibi accidit. &c. speaking of Christs dealing with his Church, he comes and he goeth away for thy good, he comes for thy good to comfort thee, after which if thou be not carefull to maintaine communion with him, then he goeth away for thy good to correct thy errour, and to enlarge thy defire of him againe, to teach thee to lay fure and faster hold upon him, when thou hast him not to let him goe againe.

That after seehing of Christ in all his meaner we must wait for him.

If you would fee a paralel place to this look in Cont. 3. where there is the like case of the Spouse and Christ, By night on my bed I fought bim, the Church fought Christ not onely by day but by night, I fought him whom my foule loved, though the wanted him, yet her foul loved him conftant-Though a Christians foule have not present communion with Christ, yet he may truly say, my foule loves him, because she seeks him diligently and constantly in the use of all the means: So we feethe Church before my Text, cals him my beloved still, though she wanted communion with him, well the goes on, I fought him, but I found him not, would the Church give over there ? no, then the rifeth and goeth about the City, and about the streets, and feeks him whom

This to the fureft token of our fervent loug to Christ.

ber

ber foule loved, feeks him and will not give over. San.XIX So I fought him (but I wanted the iffue of my feeking) I found him not, what comes upon that, The Watchmen goe about the City and find ber, of whom, when by her owne feeking the could not find Christ, she enquires, Saw you bim whom my foule loveth? The enquires of the Watchmen, the guides of Gods people, who could not fatisfie her fully, the could not find her beloved, vet what doth the ! the thewes, Ver.4. It was but a little that the stayed; after the had used all means private and publike, in her bed, out of her bed, by the Watchmen and others ; yet (faith fhe) it was but a little that I was past from them, she had not an answer presently, though the Watchmen gave her some good counsell, it was not presently, yet not long after. Christ will exercise us a while with waiting, It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my foule loved. After all our feeking there must be waiting, and then we shall find him whom our soule loveth: perhaps we have used all meanes private and publike, and yet find not that comfort we looke for, O but wait a while, God hath a long time waited for thee, be thou content to wait a while for him, we shall not lose by it; for it followes in the next verse, after she had found him whom her foule loved, I held him, I would not let him goe. So this is the iffue of defertions, they stirre up diligence and fearthing in the use of meanes privare and publike, and exercise patience to wait Gods leafure, who will not fuffer a gracious foule

long for us, it is equity to mait

Pfal. 145.

SEE XIX, Soule to faile of its expectation, at length he will fulfill the defires of them that feare him, and this comes of their patience, grace growes greater and ftronger, I held him and would not let him ove untill I had brought him unto my mothers house.

Thus you fee how the Spirit expresseth the fame truth in another state of the Church. Compare place with place. To goe on,

I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.

The words themselves are a passionare expresfion of long looks for confolation. Affections have eloquence of their owne beyond words: feare hath a proper expression love vents it selfe in broken words, and fighes, delighting in a peculiar eloquence furable to the height and pitch of the affection, that no words can reach unto fo that here is more in the words breathed from fuch an inflamed heart then in ordinary confirm ction can be pickt out (I am my Beloveds &cc.) comming from a full and large heart, expressing the union and communion between Christ and the Church (efpecially after a defertion) I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.

That there maft be union of persons before union and communion of graces with Christ.

Firft(I fay) the union, viz the union of persons which is before all comfort and communion of graces, I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine, Christs person is ours, and our persons are his; foras it is in marriage, if the person of the husband be not the wives, his goods are not hers, nor his titles of honour; for these come all to her, because his person is hers, he having passed overthe right of his owne body, and of his per-

fon

fon to his wife, as she hath passed over all the Sar.XIX. right of her felfe to her husband : foir is inthis myflicall marriage, that that intitles us to communion of graces is union of persons between Christ and his Church, I ammy Beloveds, and my Beloved himselfe is mine; And indeed nothing else will content a Christians heart, he would not care fo much for Heaven it felfe, if he had not Christ there ? the Sacrament, Word, and Comforts, why doth he efteeme them? as they come from Christ, and as they lead to Christ; it is but an adulterous and base affection to love any thing fevered from Chrift.

Now from this union of persons comes a communion of all other things whatfoever, I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine: If Christ himselfe be mine, then all is mine, what he hath done, what he hath suffered is mine, the benefit of all is mine, what he hath is mine, his prerogatives and priviledges to be the Son of God, and heire of Heaven, and the like, all is mine. Why? himselfe is mine, union is the foundation of communion. So it is here with the Church, I am my Beloveds, my person is his, my life is his, to glorifie him, and to lay it downe when he will, my goods are his, my reputation his, I am content to facrifice all for him, I am his, all mine is his a fo you fee there is union and communion mutually between Christ and his Church. The Originall and spring hereof is Christs uniting and communicating himfelfero his Church first. the spring begins to the streame, what hath the

That from union of perfons comes commun. nion of all other things whatfoever.

(treame

I Joha Is

ftreame or cifterne in it, but what is had from the foring: first we love him, because he loved as first. Ir was a true speech of Angustine, Quicquid bonum, &c. Whatfoever is good in the world or lovely, it is either God or from God sit is either Christ or from Christ, he begins it : It is faid in nature love descends, the father and the mother love the childe before the childe can love them. love indeed is of a fiery nature, onely here is the diffimilitude, fire ascends, love descends, it is stronger descending from the greater to the leffe, then afcending up from the meaner to the greater, and that for this, Amongst other reasons, Because the greater per-

Wby the magmanimity of the greater ftoops n love to the le ffer.

felf in it, the father and mother fee themselves in their childe: fo God loves us more then we can love him, because he sees his Image in us; neither is there onely a priority of order, he loves us first, and then we love him; but also of caufality, he is the cause of our love, not by way of motive onely he loves us, and therefore from an ingenious spirit we must love him againe; but he gives us his Spirit, circumcifeth our hearts to love him; for all the motives or morall perswafions in the world without the Spirit cannot make us love, we are taught of God to leve one another, our brethren whom we fee daily (faith Paul) much more need wee be raught to love him That in the whom we never faw, fo that his love kindles ours

fon looks upon the leffer as a peece of himfelf, feeshim-

Deut 30. 1 Thef. 4 9.

new Covenant God works both parts.

In the New Covenant, God works both parts,

by way of reflection.

his owne and our parts too, our leve to him, our feare of him, our faith in him, he works all, even as he shewes his owne love to us.

If God love us thus, what must we doe? meditate upon his love, let our hearts be warmed with the confideration of it, let us bring them to that fire of his love, and then they will waxe hot within us, and beg the Spirit, Lord thou hast promised to give thy Spirit to them that aske it, and to circumcise our hearts to love thee, and to love one another, give thy holy Spirit as thou hast promised.

In a word, these words, I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine, to joyne them both together, they imply a mutuall proprietty, Christ hath a propriety in me, and I in Christ, peculiar propriety, Christ is mine, so as I have none in the world so mine; whom have I in Heaven but Christ? and what is there in earth in comparison of hims he is mine, and mine in a peculiar manner, and I amhis in a peculiar manner, there is propriety with peculiarity.

Then againe these words I am his, implies mutuall love, all is mutuall in them, mutuall propriety, mutuall peculiarity, and mutuall love, I love Christ so as I love nothing else, there is nothing above him in my heart, as Christ loves me more then any thing else (saith the Church) and every Christian: he loves all, and gives outward benefits to all, but to me hath given himselse, so love I him. As the husband loves all in the family, his cattell and his servants, but he

Ser.XIX

How to have our bearts warmed with the love of God. Pial. 39.

Luk. . z.

That this confidence of the Church implies.

T. Propriety.

Tame 3,

Ec 2

gives

Sex.XIX.

gives himselfe to his Spouse. So Christ is mine, himselfe is mine, and my selfe am Christs, he hath my soule, my affections, my body, and all, he hath a propriety in me, and a peculiarity in me, he hath my affection and love to the uttermost, as I have his, for there is an entercourse in these words.

Pamiliarity.

Then againe, they imply mutuall familiarity. Christ is familiar to my foule and I to Christ, he discovers himselfe to me in the secret of his love, and I discover my selfe to him in prayer and meditation, opening my foule to him upon all occasions. Gods children have a spirit of prayer, which is a spirit of fellowship, and talkes (as it were) to God in Christ; It is the language of a new borne Christian, he cries to his Father, there is a kind of familiarity between him and his God in Christ, who gives the entrance and accesseto God, so that where there is not a kind of familiarity in prayer and opening of the foule to Christ upon all occasions, there is not this holy communion. Those that are not given to prayer, they cannot in truth speake these words, as the Church doth here, I am my Beloveds and my Beloved u mine, for they imply sweet family liarity.

4. Mutuall likenes

Then againe they imply mutuall likenesse one to another, he is mine and I am his, the one is a glasse to the other. Christ sees himselse in me, I see my selfe in him, for this is the issue of spiritual love, especially that it breeds likenesse and resemblance of the party loved in the soule

that

that loveth; for love frameth the foule to the likenesse of the party loved, I am his, I resemble him, I am his, I have given my selfe to him, I carry his picture and resemblance in my soule; for they are words of mutuall conformity. Christ out of love became like me in all things, wherein I am not like the Devill (that is finne excepted) if he became like me, taking my nature that I might be neare him in the fellowship of grace, My Beloved is mine, I wil be as like him as possible I can, I am his, every Christian carries a character of Christs disposition as farre as weaknesse will suffer, you may know Christ in every Christian; for as the Kings coyne carries the stamp of the King, Cafars coyne beares Cafars superscription. So every Chriftian soule is Gods coyne, and hee sets his owne stamp upon it; if we be Christs, there

Now where you fee a malicious, uncleane, worldly spirit, know that is a stamp of the devill, none of Christs, he that bath not the Spirit of God is none of his, now where the Spirit of Christ is, it stamps Christs likenesse upon the soule; therefore we are exhorted, Phil. 2.5. to be like minded to Christ.

is a mutual conformitie betwixt him and us.

Againe, these words, I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine, imply a mutuall care that Christ and the soul have one of the good of another, of each others honour and reputation, as Christ hatha care of our good: so a Christian soule(if it can say with truth and sincerity I am Christs)

Sun.XIX.
That love frameth the joule
to the likenesse
of the party
loved.

Mutuall care of one anothers

in the world

XIX. it must needs have care of Christs good, of his chiff children, Religion, and Truth. What ! will fuch a foule fay, shall Christ care for my body, foule and falvation, and stoop to come from Heaven to fave me, and shall I have no care for him and his glory he hath left his truth and his Church behind him, and shall not I defend his truth and stand for the poore Church to the utmost of my power against all contrary power ? shall not I stand for Religion; shall it be all one to me, what opinions are held ? shall I pretend he cares for me, and shall not I care for that I should care for ? Is it not an honour to me that he hath trufted mee to care for any thing that he will be honoured by my care, Beloved it is an honour for us that we may speake a good word for Religion, for Christs cause, for his Church against maligners and opposers, and we shall know one day that Christ will be a rewarder of every good word: where this is faid in fincerity, that Christ is mine and I am Christs, there will be this mutuall care.

A mutuall complacency or refling love.

Likewise there is implyed a mutuall complacency in these words; by a complacency, I meane a refting, contenting love, Christ hath a complacency and refting in the Church, and the Church hath a fweet resting contentment in Christ; Christ in us and we in him. A true Christian foul that hath yeelded up its confent to Christ, when it is barren in the world, vexed and turmoiled, it can rely on this, I have yet aloving husband, yet I have Christ.

Let

Let this put us upon a fearch into our felves, what we retire too when we meet with afficios. those that have brutish and beastly soules retire to carnall contentments, to good fellowship, forget, befot, and fly away from themselves; their owne consciences, and thought of their owne trouble, whereas a foule that hath any acquaintance with God in Christ, or any interest into Christ, so that it may say, that Christ is mine and I am Christs, there will be contentment and rest in such a soule, what soever it meets with in the world.

The last thing implyed is courage, a branch of the former; say all against it what they can, saith the resolved soule, I will be Christs, here is courage with refolution; agreeable hereto is that, 1/4.44.5. One shall fay I am the Lords, and another shall call himselfe by the name of Jacob, another shall subscribe and sirname himselfe by the name of Ifrael. Where there is not this refolution in good causes, there is not the Spirit of Christ, there is no interest unto Christ, it is but a delasion and selfe flattery to fay I am Christs, when there is not refolution to stand to Christ: these words are the expression of a resolved heart, I am, and I will be Chrifts, I am not ashamed of my bargaine, of the confent I have given him. I am and I will be his. You have the like in Micah 4.5. All people will walke every one Mich 4.5. in the name of his god, they will resolve on that, and we will walke in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever : fo that Ec 4

What we flout rethe to and do in affictions.

Is courage in owning Christs coufe with refolution, for the Charch is reo'mte.

Sax.XIX. where these words are spoken in truth, that I am Christs, there is necessarily implyed. I will owne him and his cause for ever and ever.

> He hath married me for ever and ever, theretore if I hope to have interest in him for comfort for ever and ever, I must be fure to yeeld my felfe to him for ever and ever, and stand for his cause in all oppositions against all enemies whatfoever. These and such like places in Scripture run paralell with this in the tex; I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine, not onely holding in the person, but in the cause of Christ. Every man hopes his God will stand for him against the Devil who accuseth us daily : If we will have Christ to stand for us, and to be an Advocate to plead our cause (as he doth) in Heaven, we must resolve to stand for him against all enemies, heretickes, schismatickes, persecutors whatsoever,

Quest

ever and ever.

But when the case is not thus with us, and that neither we can feele comfort from Christ, nor have this affurance of his love to us, what should we judge of fuch ?

that we will walke in the name of our God, for

Sol. That we floo e diffemper a de fertion.

We should not wonder to see poore soules di-Rempered when they are in spirituall desertions. confidering how the Spoule cannot endure the absence of Christ, it is out of love, therfore in the deepest plunge she hath this in her mouth, my Beleved. Therefore let us not judge amiffe of our felves or others, when we are impatient in this kind. Bur

But for a more full answer, in want of feeling SER.XIX. of the love of Christ in regard of that measure we would (for there is never altogether a want of feeling) there is so much as keeps from defpaire alway; yet if we carry a constant love towards him, mourne to him and feeke after him. as the Church here: If the defire of our foules be after him, that we make after him in the use of meanes, and are willing to speake of him, as the Church here, feele or feele not wee are his, and hee will at length discover himselfe to

Let fuch drooping spirits consider, that as he will not be long from us, nor wholly : fo it shall not be for our disadvantage that he retires at all. his absence at length will end in a sweet discovery of himselfe more abundantly then before, he absents himselfe for our good, to make us more humble and watchfull for the time to come, more pitrifull to others, more to prize our former condition, to justifie the wayes of God more firicily, to walke with him, to regaine that fweet communion which by our negligence and fecurity we loft, when we are thus prepared by his absence, there ensues a more farisfying discovery of himselfe then ever before.

But when is the time that he comes? Compare this with the former Chapter, he comes after long waiting for him, the Church waited for him, and waited in theuse of all meanes, she runs to the Watchmen, and then enquires after him of the daughters of Terufalens, after this the finds

Caufes why God abfents bimfetfe from bis children.

Harrist H

When usually Christ returnes after de ertian to the foule.

Sun-XIX

him. After we have waited and expected Christ in the use of meanes, Christ at length will discover himselfe to us. And yet more immediately it was after the Church had fo defervedly exalted him in fuch lofry praifes, This is my Beloved, the chiefe of ten thou and he is alsogether lovely: When we fet our hearts to the high exaltation of Christ above all things in the world, proclaiming him the chiefe of ten thousand, this at the last breeds a gracious discovery, I ammy Beloveds and my Beloved is mine for Christ when he sees us faithfull. and fo loving, that we will not endure his abfence, and so constantly loving, that we love him norwithstanding some discouragements, it melts him at the laft, as Tofeph was melted by his brethren.

I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.

That in order of nature Christ is ours first, though in order of knowing it is not so.

In the words you see a mutuall interest and owning between Christ and the Church, how-soever in the order of words, the Church saith, I am my Beloveds first; yet in order of nature Christ is ours first, though not in order of discovery, there is one order of knowing, and another order of causing, many things are knowne by the effect, but they issue from a cause; I know he is mine, because I am his, I have given my selfe to him, I know it is day, because the Sunne is up, there is a proofe from the effect so I know a man is alive, because he walks, there is a proofe of the cause by the effect, I am his, I have grace to give my selfe up to him; therefore I know be loves me, he is mine, thus I say in order of discovery,

bur in order of nature, he is first mine, and then Se R. XIX. I am his, My Beloved w mine and I am my Beloweds.

The Union and Communion betwixt us and Christ hath been already spoken of.

Now to speake of the branches, I am my Belo veds and my Beloved is mine, That Christis first ours, and then we are his because he is ours, and the wondrous comfort that iffues hence, that Chrift himfelfe is ours.

How comes Christ to be ours, Christisours by his Fathers gift, God hath given him for us. Christ is ours by his owne gift, he hath given himfelfe for us.

And Christ is ours by his Spirit that wirnesfeth fo much to our fpirits; for the Spirit is given for this purpose, to shew us all things that are given us of God, whereof Christ is the chiefe; therefore the Spirit of Christtelsus that Christ is ours, and Christ being ours, all that he hath is ours.

If he be ours, if we have the field, we have all the treasures in the field: if we have him, we have all his, he was borne for us, his birth was for us. he became man for us, he was given to death for us and fo likewife he is ours in his other effate of exaltation, his rifing is for our good, he will canfe us to rife alfo, and afcend with him, and fit in heavenly places, judging the world, and the Angels. We recover in this second what we lost in the first Adam.

This is a point of wondrons comfort, to thew | Confolation the

How Chrift comes to be oure

By bis owne and bis Fathers gift

Ry bis Spirit.

Vie.I.

San. XIX, the riches of a Christian, his high estate, that Christ is his.

s Cor. 1. 10.

And Christ being ours, God the Father and the Holy Spirit, and all things elfe in the world. the rich promises are ours; for in Christiney are all made, and for him they shall be performed. for indeed he is the chiefe promise of all himfelfe, and all are yea and Amen in him. Can we want Righteousnesse, while wee have Christs Righteousnesses is not his garment large enough for himselfe and us too ? is not his obedience enough for us ! shall we need to patch it up with our owne right cousnesse; he is ours, therefore his obedience is ours.

U/2. Contentation-

And this shall be a ground likewise of contentation in our condition and state whatsoever. Christ himselfe is ours. In the dividing of all things fome men have wealth, honours, friends. and greatnesse, but not Christ, nor the love of God in Christ, and therefore they have nothing in mercy; but a Christian he hath Christ himfelfe. Christ is his by faith and by the Spirits witneffeatherefore what if he want those appendencies the leffer things, he hath the maine what if he want a riveret, a streame, he hath the spring. the ocean, him in whom all things are, and shall he not be content ? Put case a man be very coverous, yet God might fatisfie him. What should anxious thoughts disquiet us & when we have fuch bils, fuch obligations from him who is faithfulnesse it selfe, when a Christian cannot fay, honour, favour, or great perfons are his ; yet

7.30

he can fay, he hath that that is worth all, more SER.XIX.

O may some say, this is but a speculation Christ is yours, a man may want and be in misery for al that? No it is a reality, Christ is ours, and all things else are ours, he that can command all things is mine, why then doe I want other things? because he sees they are not for my good, if they were he would not withhold them from me, if there were none to be had without a miracle, no comfort, no friends, he could and would make new out of nothing, nay out of contraries, were it not better for me to be without them.

That you may the more fully feed on this comfort, fludy the excellencies of Christ in the Scripture, the riches and honour that he hath, the favour he is in with his Father, with the intercession that he makes in Heaven, study his mercy, goodnesse, offices, power, &c. and then come home to your selves, all this is mine, for he is mine, the love of God is mine, God loves him, and therefore he loves me, because we are both one, he loves me with the same love that he loves his Sonne. Thus we should make use of this, that Christis ours. I come to the second.

I am my Beloveds.

This is a speech of reflection, second in nature, though first in place and in discovery to us. Sometimes we can know our owne love, when we feele not so much the love of Christ, but Christs

Object.
Anfw.
Why sometimes we want out-

ward things be-

ing in Christ.

Use 3.
Exportation to findy the exceltency of Christ. Poh, 17, ult.

1 Ioh,4.19

San.XIX. Christs love must be there first, I am my Belo-

How we come to be audare in Obrift beloved.

By bis Fathers

How are we Christs Beloved? we are his, first of all by his Fathers gift; for God in his eternall purpose gave him for us, and gives us to him, as it is in the excellent prayer, 16hn 17. Father thine they were and thou gavest them me. I had not them of my selfe first, but thine they were before all worlds were, thou gavest them me to redeeme them, and my Commission doth not extend beyond thy gift; I die for all those that thou gavest me, I sanctifie my selfe for them that they may be sanctified: so we are Christs in his Fathers gift; but that is not all, though it be

the chiefe fundamentall principall ground of

By Redemption

all.

Exod.4.25.

For we are his likewise by Redemption, Christ tooke our nature, that he might die for us to purchase us. We cost him deare, we are abloudy Spouse to Christ, as that froward woman wrongfully said to Meses, thou are a bloudy husband unto mee so Christ may without wrong say to the Church, thou are a Spouse of bloud to me. We were indeed to be his Spouse; but first he must win us by conquest in regard of Satan, and then satisfic justice, we were in such debt by sin, lying under Gods wrath, so as till all debts were paid, we could not in the way of justice be given as a Spouse to Christ.

Nor is this all, but we are Christs by Marriage also, for when he purchased us, and paid so deare for us s when he died and satisfied di-

vine

By Marriage.

vine luftice, he did it with a purpose to marry us | San XIX. to himselfe, we have nothing to bring him but debt and mifery, yet he tooke upon him our nature to discharge all, that he might marry us, and take us to himselfe, so we are his by Marriage.

Then againe we are his by Confent, we have passed our selves over unto him, he hath given himselfe to us, and we have given our selves to him backe againe. To come to some Use of it,

if we be Christs as Christ is ours.

First it is a point of wondrous comfort, God will not fuffer his owne to want, he is worfe then an Infidell that will fuffer his Family to perish; when we are once of Christs Family, and not only of his Family, but of his body, his Spoule, can we thinke he will fuffer us to want that which is needfull?

Then againe, as it comforts us against want, To it likewise fenceth us against all the accusations of Satan, I am Christs, I am Christs, if he have any thing to fay, loe we may bid him goe to Christ: If the Creditor comes to the wife, she is not lyable to pay her owne debts, but faith, goe to my husband : fo in all temprations learne hence, to fend Satan whether hee should be fent, when we cannot answer him, fend him to Chrift.

And for the time to come, what a ground of comfort is this, that we are Christs as well as he is ours; what a plea doth this put into our months for all things that are beneficiall to us, Lord

Ry Confent.

Ule.I. Confolation agarnst wants.

tans acculations.

Sur.XIX. Lord I am thine, fave me (faith the Pfalmiff) why : fave me, because I am thine, I am thine, Lord reach me and direct me. The husband is to direct the Spoule, the head should direct all the fenfes: All the treasures of wildome are in Chrift. as all the fenfes are in the head for the good of the body, all fulneffe dwels in him ; therefore pleade with him, I want wisdome, teach me and infruct me how to behave my felfe in troubles, in dangers, in feares: If it be an argument ffrong enough amongst men (weake men) I am thine. I am thy childe, I am thy Spoule, &c. Shall we attribute more pitty and mercy to our felves then to the God of mercy and comfort, who planted these affections in the creature? Shall he make men tender and carefull over others, and shall not be himselfe be carefull of his owne flocke ? doe we thinkerhat he will negled his jewels, his Spouse, his Diadem and Crowne ? he will not ?

Ifa.62.7.

But you will urge experience, we see how the Church is used even as a forlorne widdow, as if the had no husband in the world; as an Orphan that hath no Father, therefore how doth this Stand good :

Anfw.I That the fuffe rines both of

Theanswer is, all that the Church or any particular Christian suffers in this world, it is but that there may be a conformity between the Spoule and the Husband. The Head wore a crowne of thornes, and went to Heaven and happines, through a great deale of mifery and abalement in the world the lowest that ever was: And it

it is not meet that the Church should go to Hea. Swn. XIX.

ven another way.

Then againe, all this is but to fashion the Spoule to be like to Christ, but to bring the Church and Christ nearer together, that is all the hurt they doe, to drive the Church nearer to Christ then before, Christ is as neare to his Church as ever in the greatest afflictions by his Spirit, Christ cryes out on the croffe, My God, my God why hast thou for faken me ? It is a strange voice, that God should be his God, and yet notwithstanding seeme to for sake him. But God was never more his God then at that prefent ; indeed he was not his God in regard of fome feelings that he had enjoyed in former times, he feemed to be forfaken in regard of some sence, as Christ feemes to for fake the Church in regard of some fence and feeling, but yet his God still. So the Church may fay, I am thine still, though she feeme to be forfaken in regard of some feelings, yet the is not deferted in regard of Gods care for support of the inward man and fashioning to Chrift. The Church hath never sweeter communion with Christ, then under the greatest croffes; and therefore they many times have proved the ground of the greatest comforts ; for Christ leads the Church into the wildernesse, and then fpeaks to her heart, Hofea 2.14. Christ speaks to the heart of his Spoule in the wilderneffe, that is, in a place of no comfort, there are no Orchards or pleasures, but all discomforts there a man must have it from Heaven if he

To falbion ber to be like Chrift

though Chrift feem abfent in affliction, yet ke is never more gra. ciously nearer then then.

That the freeteft Communion with Christ is under the greateft croffes.

have

have any good in the wilderneffe. In that wilderneffe that is in a desolate disconsolate estate: Christ speaks to the heart of his children, there is in the wilderoesse oftentimes a sweet intercourse of love incomparably beyond the time of

prosperity.

Again, to flay your hearts, know this will not be long, as we see here the Church seemed to be for faken and neglected, fell into the hands of cruell Watchmen, and was faine to goe through this and that meanes, but it was not long ere the met with him whom she sought after. It may be midnight at this time, but the night continues not long, it will be morning ere long; therefore the Church may well fay, Rejoyce not againft me,0 mine enemy, as it is Alicah 7. For though I be fatten, I shall rife againe, though I fit in dark. nesse, the Lord will be a light unto me. It shall not be alway ill with the Church, those that furvive us shall see other manner of dayes then we fee ver (whatfoever we shall our selves) Hence we have also an Use of Tryall, Whosoever are Christs, they have hearts to give themselves to him, as he gives himselfe, not his goods or his honours, but himselfe for his Church. Sothe Church gives her felf to Chrift, my delight is in him, he hath my felfe, my heart, my love and affcation, my joy and delight, and all with my felf, if I have any honour, he shall have it, I will use it for his glory, my riches I will give them to him and his Church, and Ministery and Children (as occasion shall serve) I am his, therefore

Taring Sine

Micah 7.8,

Tryall if or not wee be Chrifts by giving our elves over to bim to be ruled by bim.

fore all that I have is his if he ask it at my hands. It is faid of the Macedonians, they gave themfelves to Christ, and then their riches and goods; it is an easie matter to give our riches to Christ, when we have given our selves first. A Christian as foone as ever he becomes a Christian, and everafter to death and in death too, he gives up himselfe to Christ; they that stand with Christ, and will give this or that particular, will part only with idle things that they may spare, are they Christs ! No,a Christian gives himselfe, and all his to Chrift : fo we fee here what we should doe if Christ be ours, let us give up our felves to him, as it is Rom. 12. the iffue of all that learned profound discourse in the former part of the Epiffle, that Chriff it ff fieth us by his righteoufneffe and merit, and fancifies us by his Spirit, and bath predeftinated and elected us and refused others, is this, I befeech you give up your foules and bodies, and all as aliving facrifice holy and acceptable unto God.

In briefe hefe words imply renunciation and refignation, I am his, that is, I have given up my selfe to him, therefore I renounce all others that stand not with his love and liking. I am not only his by way of service, which I owe him above all that call for it; but I am his by way of refignation, if he will have medye, I will dye, if he will have me live here, I will, I have not my selfe to dispose of any longer, I have altogether alienated my selfe from my selfe, I am his to serve him, his to be disposed of by him, I have renounced all other.

Ff 2

SER.XIX.

That after we have given our felves to Christ it is an easie matter to part with all things unto him.

a Cor.8.<.

That the churches confidence implyes remainisting, and refiguration in a drep /ence.

SER. XIX.

And w.

An anifose to save a serios despoire or fin in temptation.

1. Cor. 6.15.

That it is our exceeding happines shut non we are not our owne.

Therefore here we have another answer to Saran. If he comes to us and folicite us to finne. let the Christians heart make this answer, Iam nor mine owne. what hath Satan and his inftruments to doe with mer is my body his to defile? is my tongue his to sweare at his pleasure ? shall I make the Temple of God the member of an harlot! (as the Apostle reasons) shall I defile my veffell with finne ? What faith converted Ephra. im, Holeas A. 8. What have I any more to doe with Idols, for I have feen and observed bim? We ought to have such resolutions ready in our hearts : indeed when a Christian is refolute, the world counts fuch to be loft, he is gone, we have loft him, fay your diffolute prophane perfons. It is true they have loft him indeed, for he is not his owne, much leffe theirs any longer, but he is found to God, and himselfe, and the Church. Thus wee fee what springs from this, that Christ is ours, and that we are Christs backe again. Let us carry this with us even to death, and if times fhould come that God fhould honour us by fervine himselfe of us in our lives, if Christ will have us spend our bloud, consider this, I am not mine owne in life nor death, and it is my happineffethat I am not mine owne; for if I were mine owne, what should I doe with my felfe! I should lose my felfe as Adam did. It is therefore my happinessethat I am not mine owne, that I am not the worlds, that I am not the Devils, that none else bath to doe with me, to claime any interest in me, but I am Christs, if I doe any thing for others, it is for Christs sake. Remember this for the time to come, if there be any thing that we will not part with for Christs sake, it will be our bane, we shall lose Christ and it too. If we will not say with a perfect spirit I am his, my life, my credit, my person is his, any thing his, looke what we will not give for him, at length we shall lose and part with it and him too.



The twentieth Sermon.

our felves to him by this I fee effer

I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, be fee-



He Church you fee here, though face frood out a while against all Christs invitation and knocking, yet at length shee is brought to yeeld her selfe up wholly unto

Christ, and to renounce her selfe, which course God takes with most, yea in a manner with all his people ere they goe out of this world, to lay all high things low, to be a downe every high thought and imagination which exalteth it selfe

Ff 3

Sen.XII

against him, that they may give themselves and all they have to Christ, if he call for it, for he that doth not so is not worthy of Christ, if we do not this at least in preparation of mind, let us not owne the name of Christians, lest we owne that which shall further increase and aggravate our condemnation, professing Religion one way, and yet alienating our minds to our lusts and pleasures of the world another way, to have peculiar love sits of our owne distinct from Christ, how stands this with, I ammy Beloveds, and my Beloved it mine, how stands it with the selfe resignation that was spoken of before.

Reasons of felfe resignation to Christ, being persuaded that be users. Now this followes upon apprehension of Christ being ours, I am my Beloveds, because my Beloved is mineful. There are source reasons why Christ must be given to us, before we can give our selves to him by this selfe resignation.

1. Because he is the chiefe spring of all good affer-

can love him, 1 lob 4.10,19.

2. Because love descends, though it be of a siery nature, yet in this it is contrary, for love descends, whereas fire ascends, the superiour first loves the inferiour, Christ must descend in his love to us, ere we can ascend to him in our affections.

3. Because our nature it such that we cannot leve but where wee know our selves to be leved first therefore God is indulgent to us herein, and that we may love him he manifests his love first to us.

4. Because naturally our selves being conscious of San XI guilt are full of feares from thence: fo that if the foule be not per swaded first of Christs love, it runs away from him; as Adam did from God, and as Peter from Christ, Depart from me for I am but a sinfull man. So the foule of every man would fay if first it were not perswaded of Gods love in Christ, who amongst us shall dwell with the everlasting burning; therefore to prevent that disposition of foule, which would rife out of the fence of guilt and unworthinesse, God first speakes to us in Chrift; at length faying unto our foules, I amthy falvation, whereupon the foule first finding his love, loves him backe againe of whom it finds it felfe fo much beloved, fo that our love is but a reflection of his, I am my Beloveds because my Beloved is mine

It is with the Spirit of God, as with the spirits in the soule and body of a man, there is a marriage betwix the body and soule, the spirits joyne both together, being of a middle nature, for they have somewhat spirituall near the soule, and somewhat bodily neare the body, therefore they some between the body and the soule, and are the instruments thereof, whereby it works. So it is with the Spirit of God, the same Spirit that sels the soule that Christ is ours, the same Spirit makes up the march on our part, and gives us up to Christ againe.

Let this then be the tryall, that wee are Christopy the spiritual! Ecchoe that our foules makes to that report which Christ makes to

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SEE.XX. our foules, whether in promifes or in infructi

Use 1.
Of Instruction.

That fairb barb a double worke, at to receive Chrift, so ta give in backe againe to Chrift.

That the Churches confidence shower a mutual counterview of justification and faultification.

See hence likewife the nature of Faith for thefe are the words of Faith, as well as of love. Faith hath two branches, it doth give as well as take: Faith receives Christ, and sayes, Christis mine, and the same Faith Saith, I am Christs againe. Indeed our foules are empty, fo that the maine worke of Faith is to bee an empty hand, Mendica manus (as Luther cals it) a beggers hand to receive abut when it hath received. ir gives backe againe, both our felves and all that we can dor; as a Car. 8.5. The Churches of Ma creaming gave themselves, and then they gave their goods. Where Faith is there will be a giving of our felves and our goods, and (by a proportion) our ftrength, wits and all backe againe. This discovers a great deale of empry falle Faith in the world; for undoubtedly if it were true Faith, there would be a yeelding backe

And againe, these words discover the minual soberence of Inflish ation and Santisfeation, and the dependance one upon another, sam my Beloved, and my Reloved a mine, Christismine, his sighteopolacise is mine for my justification. I am closthed with Christ, as it is, Rev. 12. The Santisthera's clothed with the Sanne, with the beames of Christ; but is that all? No Jam my Reloved, Lam Christs, there is a returne of Faith in Santisfication, the same, Spirit that withesself-chieft is out, it santisfication, the same, Spirit that withesself-chieft is out, it santisfication, the same Spirit that withesself-chieft is out, it santisfication, the same spirit that withesself-chieft is out, it santisfication, the same spirit that withesself-chieft is out.

we can fay, I am Christs. It ferves to infrince us San XX therefore in the necessary connexion of these two, Inflification and Sandification, against the idle flander of Papists, that finfully traduce that Doctrine as if we were Solifi deans, as if we fevered Inflification from Santlification. No we hold here that whenfoever Christ is ours, there is a Spirit of Sanctification in us, to yould all to Christ, though this refignation be not prefently perfect. much loves to much grace

This likewise helps us (by way of Direction) to understand the Covenant of Grace and the Seales of the Covenant, what they inforce and comprise not only what God will doe to us, but the duty we are to doe to him againe, though we docit in his firength. A Covenant holds not on one fide, but on both, Christ is mine, and I am Christs againe, I will be sheir God, but they must have grace to be my people, and then the Covenant is made up. The Covenant of Grace is fo called, because God is so gracious as to inable us to performe our owne part, and double of or

And fo in the Scales of the Covenant, in Baptifme. God dort not only bind himfelfe to doe chusandelusto us, ber binds is alforo dec backe againg to him. So in the Communion we promife reclead a new life, renewing our Covenants and therefore we must northinke that all is well. when we have received our maker, though we continue in a feandalous, fruitleffe course of life. No there is a promise in the Sacrament the Scale of the Covenant of grace, to yeeld up our felves

V/c.4.

Far . confide the percie

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A direction bo to under fand the Covenant o

Grace.

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SER XIX. felves to God, to seturne to Christ againe with our duty, then we come as we should doe, when we come thus disposed. This for direction, or Beloved is mine, and I am my Beloveds.

U/c.4. For . comfort ! Christians, and to the whole Church.

To proceed, to make an Use of Comfort to poore doubting Christians, I am my Beloveds, is the voice of the whole Church, that all ranks of Christians (if they be true) may without prefumption take up. I have not fo much Faith, fo much love, fo much grace, fo much patience, as another (faith a poore Christian) therefore. I am none of Christs; but we must know that Christ hath in his Church of all ranks, and they are all his Spoule, one as well as another, there is no exception, there is a little spirit of emulation, and a spice of envy in Christians that are weaker, if they have not all that great measure of grace which they fee in others, they fearethey have none at all, as if there were no Babes in Christs fchoole, as well as men, and growne perfons.

That the nature Faith is the

Gal. 2.

Then againe, we see here the nature of Faith in the whole Church, it is the same that is in eve-Charch ry particular, and the fame in every particular, as it is in the whole Church. The whole Church faith, I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, I appropriate him, there is a spirit of appropriation in the whole, and there is fo in each particular Every Christian may say with Paul, 'Ilive by Raitban the Same of God, that bath loved meand gove bimfelfe for me, and with Thomas, my God that there is a gromife in the Sabnot rebeat

The ground hereof is because they are all one

Rev. 12.

in Chrift, and there is one and the fame Spirit in San XI the whole Church and every particular Christian: As in pipes though of different founds, yet there is the same breath in them. So Christians may have different founds from the greater or leffer strength of grace that is in the one and in the other, but all comes from the same breath. the same Spirit. The Spirit in the Bride faith come, the whole Church faith it, and every particular Christian must say it; because as the body is acted by one Spirit, and makes but one naturall body, though confisting of many parts weaker and ftronger. So should there be a harmony in this mystical body acted by that one Spirit of Christ, who so regards all, as if there were but one, and regards every one fo, as he doth not forget the whole, Sicomnibus attentus ut non detentue, &c. Christ so attends to all, that he is not detained from any particular, and he so attends every particular that he is not restrained from all, there is the same love to all as to one, and to every one, as if there were no other, he fo loves each one, that every Christian may fay as well as the whole Church, Christ is mine, and I am Christs.

In those things that we call Homogenial, there is the fame nature in each quantity as in the whole: As there is the fame nature in one drop of water as in the whole Ocean, all is water, and the same respect of a sparke, and of all the element of fire : fo Christ beares the same respect to she Church as to every particular, and to eve

San.XX.

Ulez. How to bave direction to be able to fay with am my Beloveds,&c.

in the confideration of Christs love to me.

Ioh. 1 3.1.

Gal.4.9. Phil. z. 12. ry panicular as to the Church.

To come to make an Use of Direction, how to come to be able to fay this, I am my Beloveds and my Beloved a mine. For answer hereto rake notice in the first place from the dependance, Christ must be first ours before we can give our selves to him, therefore we must dwell in the consideration of Christs love, this must direct and leade our me-We wuft dwell thod in this thing. Would we have our hearts to love Christ, to trust in him, and to embrace him, why then thinke what is he to us ? begin there, nay and what we are ? weake, and in our apprehension loft, then goe to confider his love, his constant love to his Church and children, whom be loves be loves to the end. We mult warme our foules with the confideration of the love of God in him to us, and this will ftirre up our Faith to him backe againe: For we are more fafe in that be is ours, then that we give our felves to him: we are more (afein his comprehending of us, then in our classing and helding of him : As we fay of the mother and the childe both hold, but the fafety of the childe is that the mother holds him : If Christ once give himselfe to us, he will make good his owne part alway, our Safety is more on his side then on ours. If ever we have feleric love of Chrift, we may comfort our felves with the conflancy and perpetuity thereof, though perhaps we find not our affections warmed to him at all times nor alike; yet the ffrength of Christians comfort lyes in this, that first, Christ is mine, and then in the second place, that I am bu. Now (I fay) that we may be able to maintaine

taine this bloffed tradition of giving our felves to SEATXX Chrift. Let us dwell in the confideration of his love to us, and of the necessity that we have of him, how miferable weare without him, poore, beggerly, in bondage to the Devill; therefore we must have him to recover us out of debt, and to enriches: For Christslove carries him forth non onely to pay all our debts for us, but to enrich us, and it is a proceeding, preferving towe, withbeitings us to Heaven his owne place, where we shall ever be with him. The confideration of thefethings will warme our hearts, and for this purpole ferves the Ministery. o and draw and to work work

We should therefore in the next place attend upon the Word, for this very end. Wherefore fervesthe Ministery ? Among many others, this is one maine end, to lay open the unfearchable riches of Christ, therein you have fomething of Christ unfolded of his Natures, Offices, and benefits we have by him, Redemption, and freedome and a right to all things in him, the excellencies of another world; rherefore arrend upon the meanes of falvation, that we may know what riches we have in him, this will keep our affections close to Christ, fo as to fay, I am his.

And labour we also every day more and more to bring all our love to him, we fee in burning glaffes, where the beames of the Sunne meet in one, how forcible they are, because there is an union of the beames in a little point. Let it be our labour that all the beames of our love may meet in Chrift, that he may be as the Church faith,

Dwell in the confideration of mi/ery without Christ and our never firy to bave bim.

We must ditieently attend the minifters o the Word.

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Seriff fore

We mast labour every day what we can to comtraff, draw and to bring all out love to Chrift.

San.XX

How farre we may love other things besides Christ.

our Beloved, My Beloved is mine and I am my Beloveds (faith the) as if the Church had no love our of Christ. And isit love lost ! No but as Christ is the Churches Beloved, fo the Church is Christs love againe, as we see in this booke oft. my Love, my Dove. As all ftreames meet in the great Ocean, fo let all our loves meet in Chrift. we may love other things, and we should doe fo, but no otherwise then as they convay love to us from Christ, and may be meanes of drawing up our affections unto Christ. We may love our friends (and we ought to doe fo) and other bleffings of God, but how? No otherwise then as tokens of his love to us : we love a thing that our friend fends to us, O but it is as it doth convay his affection to us. So must we love all things as they come from Gods love to us in Christ.

That all wee receive from Christ, even afst stions are tove tokens.

Wee must prepare our bearts in the love of Christ. Ind.very21.

And indeed whatfoever we have is a love token, even our very afflictions themselves, whom Hove I rebuke and chastise.

Againe, that we may inflame our hearts with the love of Christ, as we are exhorted by Inde, Let us consider the vanity of all things that should entife us from Christ, and labour every day more and more to draw our affections from them, as we are exhorted, Plalm.45. Hearken o daughter, and consider, and incline thine eare, forget also thine owne people, and thy Fathers house, so if we will have Christ to delight in us, that we may say we are his, let us labour to sequester our affections more and more from all earthly things,

things, that we may not have such hearts, as SER.XX. Saint James speakes of adulterous hearts. O vee Adulterers and Adulteresses, know you not that the love of the world is enmity with God.

Indeed there is reason for this exhortation, for all earthly things, they are all vaine and empty things, there is an emptineffe in whatfoever is in the world (fave Christ) therefore we should not fet our affections roo much upon them; I man cannot be wife in loving any thing but Christ, and what he loves for Christ. Therefore let us follow that counfell to draw our felves from our former company, acquaintance, pleafures, delights, and vanities, we cannot bestow our love and our affections better then upon Christ- It is a happineffe that we have such affections, as joy, delight and love planted in us by God; and what a happinesse is it, that we should have such an excellent object to fill those affections, yea to tranfeend and more then fatisfie them. Therefore the Apostle wisheth that they may know all the demensions of Gods love in Christ, there is a height, bredth, length, and depth of the love of Eph.3 18. God.

And let us think of the demensions, the height, bredth, and depth-of our misery out of Christ. The more excellent our natures are, the more miserable they are if not changed; for looke what degree of excellency we have (if it be not advanced in Christ) we have so much misery being out of him; therefore let us labour to fee this,

SER,XX.

good grounds to fay, Lam my Beloveds, and my Beloved u mine.

1 Joh 1.3.

Againe, let us labour to walke in the light of a fanctified knowledge to be attained by the Gofpell; for asit is, 1 lohn 1.3. the end of all our preaching is to affare Christ to the soule, that we may be

able to fay without deceiving our owne foules.

The maine end of preaching.

I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine. All preaching (I say) is for this end, the terrour of the Law and the discovery of corruption is to drive

Law and the discovery of corruption is to drive us out of our selves to him, and then to provoke us to grow up into him more and more. Therefore saith John, All our preaching is that we may have fellowship with the Father and the Sonne, and they with us: And what doth he make an evidence of that fellowship, walking in the light, as he is light, or else we are lyars the is bold in plaine

1 Joh. 1.7.

tearmes to give us the lye, to fay we are Christs, and have communion with the Father and the Sonne, when yet we walke in darknesse, in sinnes against conscience, in wilfull ignorance, the darknesse of an evill life, we have no communion with Christ; therefore if we will have communion with him, let us walke in the light, and sabour to be lightsome in our understandings, to have a great deale of knowledge, and then to walke answerable to that light and reve-

lation that we have. Those that live in sinnes against conscience, and are friends to the darknesse of ignorance, of an evil life, Oh they never

thinke of the fellowship with Christ and with God.

God, thefe things are meere riddles to them, San.XX. they have no hope of them, or if any, their hope is in vaine, they barre themselves of ever having comfortable communion with Christ here, much leffe shall they enjoy him hereafter in Heaven.

Therefore labour every day more and more to grow rich in knowledge, to get light and to walke in that light; to which end pray with the holy Apolle, Ephel . 1. That you may have the Spirit of Revelation, that excellent Spirit of God to reveale the things of God, that we may have the

light discovered to us.

What a world of comfort bath a Christian that hath light in him, and walks in that light, above another man, whether he live or dve. the light brings him into fellowship with the Father of lights : He that hath this light knowes his condition and his way, and whither he goeth, when he dyeth he knowes in what condition he dyeth, and upon what grounds. The very light of natureis comfortable, much more that of grace, therefore labour to grow daily more and more in the knowledge and obedience of the light.

All professors of the Gospell are either such as are not Christs, or such as are his; for such as are not yet, that you may be provoked to draw to fellow thip with Christ. Doe but consider you are as branches cut off, that will wither and dye and be cast into the fire, unlesse you be gratted into the living stocke, Christ, you are as naked

A ferious exbortation for luch who are not yet in Cbrift , to

come in.

The excellency of a Christian

walking in di-

vine light above others.

persons

Sas.XX

persons in a storme not cloathed with any thing to stand against the storme of Gods wrath, let this force you to get into Christ.

That in the Goffell Christ by the M ntftery offereth bimsel unto all

And next for encouragement confider, Christ offereth himselfe to all in the Gospell, and that is the end of the Ministery to bring Christ and our soules together, to make a spiritual marriage, to lay open his riches and to draw you to him: If you confesse your sinnes he will forgive them, and you shall have mercy, Herelieves these that are wearied and heavy laden; and bids those come to him that are thirsty, Christ came to seeke, and to save that which was lost, Christ offers himselfe in mercy to the worst soule.

1 Iohn 1.9. Prov. 18. Mat 1 1.ult. Ifa. 55.1.

Therefore if there be any that have lived in evill courses, in former times, consider that upon repentance all shall be forgotten, and as a miss scattered away and cast into the bottome of the Sea. Christ offers himselfe to you, these are the times, this is the houre of grace, now the water is stirring for you to enter: doe but entertaine Christ, and desire that he may be yours to rule you and guide you, and all will be well for the time to come.

Objett.

Doe not object I am a lot blome creature full of re-

Anjw.

Christ doth not match with you, because you are good, but to make you good; Christ takes you not with any dowry, all that he requires is to confesse your beggery and to come with emptinesse. He takes us not because we are clean, but because he will purge us, he takes us in our bloud when

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Ezek. 16. Eph 5.27.

he first takes us. Let none despaire either for want of worth or of ftrength, Christ feeth that for strength we are dead, and for worth we are enemies; but he gives us both spirituall strength and worth, takes us neare to himselfe, and enrichethus. Let none therefore be discouraged, it is our office thus to lay open and offer the riches of Christ: If you will not come in, but love your finfull courses more then Christ, then you perish in your bloud, and we free our hands, and may free our foules from the guilt thereof; therefore as you love your owne foules, come in at length and stand out no longer.

And for those that have in some measure given themselves up to Christ, and can say, He is mine and I am his, let them goe on with comfort and never be discouraged for the infirmities that hang about them. For one part of Christs Of. fice is to purge his Church by his Spirit more and more Epbef. 5.27. not to cast her away for her infirmities, but to wash and cleavse it more and more till it be a glorioue Spouse like himselfe : For if the husband will by the bond of nature, beare with the infirmities of the wife (as the weaker veffell) doth not Christ bind himselfe by that which he accounts us bound? Is there more love, and mercy, and pitty in us to those that we take neare us, then there is in Christ to us ? What a most blasphemousthought were this to conceive fo ? Onely let us take heed of being in league with finne, for we cannot give our foules to Christ, and to finfull courses too; Christ

Gg 2

them that have given them, Pelves to Christ SER.XX.

Christ will allow of no bigamy or double marriage where he hath any thing to doe, we must have fingle hearts, refolving though I fall, ver I purpose to please Christ, and to goe on in a good converfation; and if our hearts tell us fo, daily infirmities ought not to discourage us, we have helps enough for thete. First, Christ bids us aske forgivenesse, and then we have the mercy of Christ to beare with weaker vessels, then his Advocation, he is now in Heaven to plead for usaif we were perfect we needed not that office: Let none be discouraged therefore, but let us labour more and more, that we may be able to comprehend in some measure the love of Christ. fo will all duties come off fweetly and eafily, and then wee shall be inabled to suffer all things, not onely willingly, but cheerfully, and rejoyce in them. Love is of the nature of fire. which as it fevereth and confumeth all that is

and then wee shall be inabled to suffer all things, not onely willingly, but cheerfully, and rejoyce in them. Love is of the nature of fire, which as it severeth and consumeth all that is opposite, all drosseand dregs, and dissolves coldnesses in quickens and makes active and lively, it hath a kind of constraining force, a sweet violence (as the Apostle saith) the love of Christian straineth, 2 Cor. 5.24.

Let a man that loves the Lord lesus Christian sincerity, be called to part with his life, he will yeeld icas a facrissee with comfort. Come what

Let a man that loves the Lord Ielus Christin fincerity, be called to part with his life, he will yeeld it as a facrifice with comfort. Come what will, all is welcome when we are inflamed with the love of Christ, and the more we fiffer, the more we find his love; for he referves the manifestation of his love most for times of suffering, and the more we find the manifestation of

1 Joh. 2. 2.

That to fuffer and to facilitate all durier, wee should tabour more and more for the love of Christ.

He feedeth among the Lillies.

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his love, the more we love him backe againe, and Sxx.XX. rejoyce in fuffering for him, that wee love fo, whether they beduties of obedience, active or passive, doing or suffering, all comes off with abundance of cheerfulnesse and case, where the love of Christ is, that the foule can fay, I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, nothing in the world is able to make fuch a foule miterable. It followes,

He fredeth among the Lillies.

The Church here thewes where Christ feeds. But the question is, Whether it be the feeding of the Church and People that is here meant; or whether he feeds himselfe. For answer he both feeds his Church among the Lillies, and delights himfelfe to be there; the one followes the other, especially it is meant of the Church, those that are his, he feeds them among the Lillies.

Lillies are such kind of flowers as require a great deale of nourishment, and grow best in vallies and fat ground; therefore when the faith; be lies. feeds among the Lillies, the meaning is, he feeds his Church and people in fat pasture ; as sheep in such grounds as are sweet and fruitfull, such are his holy Word, and the Communion of Saints, these are especially the pastures wherin be feeds his Church. The holy truths of God are the food of the foule, whereby it is cherished and nourished up to life everlasting. This whole Bookeisa kind of Pastorall (to understand the

Wbat meant by Christs feedide among the Lil

Word

Word a little better) a Song of a Beloved concerning a Belovedstherefore Christ in many pla. ces of this Booke, he takes upon him the terme and carriage (as it were) of a loving Shepheard, who labours to find out for his sheep the fattest, fruitfulleft, best and sweetest pastures, that they may grow up as Calves of the fall, as it is Malachy 4.2. that they may grow and be well liking.

Cant, 1,7,

You have (to give light to this place) a phrase fornewhat like to this, where he followes the point more at large, Cant. 1.7. the Church there prayes to Christ, Tell me, O then whom my foule lo. wesh, where show feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noone. Those that are comming up in the Church, defire to know with whom they may joyne, and what truths they may embrace. Tell me where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flocks to rest at moone; that is, in the greatest heate and storme of perfecution, as at noone day the Sunne is horrest: For why should I be as one that turnes afide by the flocks of the companions? that is, by those that are not true friends, that are false fhepheards, why fhould I be drawne away by them: I defire to feed where thou feedeft among thy fleep. Why flould I be as one that turnes afide by the flocks of those that are Emulators to theeras Antichrift is to Chrift. Thus the Church puts forth to Chrift, whereunto Chrift replyes, vetle 8. If then know not, O thou fairest among wemen, goe thy way furth by the foot steps of the flocks, and feed thy Kids bolides the Thepheards tents ; that

is, if thou know not, goe thy way forth, get thee San.XX. out of thy selfe, out of the world, out of thy former course, purthy selfe forward, stay not complaining, goe on, put thy felfe to endeavour, goe thy way forth, whither ? in the footsteps of the flocks, see the steps of Christians in the best times of the Church in former times, tread in the steps of those that lived in the best ages of the Church; feed thy kids, thy Christians, besides the Shepheards tents, the best Shepheards: Marke where the Apostles and Prophets feed their sheep, there feed thou, and marke the footsteps of the flock that have lived in the best times ; for of all times fince the Apostles and Prophets, we must follow those Virgin best times. All Churches are fo far true Churches as they have Confanguinity with the Primitive, Apostolicall and Propheticall Churches.

Therefore we are now to goe out by the footfless of the flocke. Marke the footsteps of former Chri-Stians, Abraham, Mofes, and David, and in Christs time, of Iohn, Peter, and the reft, bleffed Saines, walke as they walked, goe their way, and feed your selves by the shepheards tents: mark the shepheards where they have their tents. So thefe words have reference to the Propheticall, especially to the Evangelical times, whereunto we must conforme our selves, for the latter times are Apostate times. After a certaine leason the Church kept not her purity, which the Scriptures foretold directly, that we should not take scandall arit, the Church did fall to a kind of ad-

Gg 4

miration

SER.XX.

mirarion of Antichtift, and embraced doctrines of devils; therefore now we must not follow these companies that lead into by-paths, contrary to the Apoltolicall wayes, but fee wherein our Church agrees with the Apostolicall Churches and truth, and embrace no truth for the food of out foules, but that we find in the Gofpell. For Antichrift feeds his flocke with winde, and with poylon, and with empty things. For what bath been the food in Popery ? Iweet and goodly titles, as if they poore foules had the best Paftors in the world, when as they administer to them nothing but that which will be the bane of their foules, full of poilon and fraud. This is fpoken to unfold that place which gives light to this, spoken of the pastorall care of Christ, he feeds his flocke among the Lillies, plentifully and fweetly. From hence may be briefly observed. firft.

Observ.
That we need feeding as well as breeding in christianity.

1 Pet. 1. 23.

That Christ feeds as well as breeds.

And we have need of feeding, as well as breeding: where don't thou feed? that is, build up thy children, and goe on with the worke begun in them. We have need to be fed after we are bred, and Christ (answerable to our exigence and necessary) he feeds as well as breeds, and that Word which is the feed to beget us, is that which feeds too. What is the feed of the new Birth: the Word of God, the holy promises they are the feed, the Spirit mingling with them, whereby a Christian is borne, and being borne is cherished and bred, there fore, As new borne Babes,

faith the Apostle, i Pet. 2.1. defire the fincere milke SBR.XX. of the Word, that you may grow thereby. So that the famething is both the feed of a Christian, and that which breeds him, the bleffed truth and promifes of God.

If you aske, why we must grow up and be fed Quest.

Rill?

Doe but aske your owne foules, whether there be not a perpetuall renewing of corruption which fill breaks out into new guilt every day. Therefore we have need to feed every day anew upon the promifes, upon old promifes with new affections, fomewhat breakes out ever and anon, which abaseth the soule of a Christian, that makes him goe with a sharp appetite to the bleffed truths that feed his foule.

And then againe, we need a great deale of ftrength, which is maintained by feeding, befides the guilt of the foule, there needs ftrength for dury, which mull be fetched from the bleffed Word of God, and the comforts thence, whereby we are able to withfland and refift, to fland and doe all that we doe.

And then we are fet upon by variety of temptati. ons within and without, which require variety of wisedome and strength, all which must be gotten by feeding; and therefore you fee a Christian for his subsistance and being hath need of a feeding, cherishing, and maintaining still by the sweet and bleffed directions and promifes out of the Mord of God com wang of no bool or spain

An W. I In regard of daity new guile.

Anfw. 2. Becaufe me need much firengub.

Anwa. In regard variely of temptation needs vari ety of wifedome

There-

A refutation their error who Reight religion walking with God and the exercifes of Religion.

Therefore you may fee what kind of Atheifficall creatures those are, and how much they are to be regarded that turne off all with a compendium in Religion, tush if weeknow that we must love God above all, and our neighbour as our felves, and that Christ dyed for all, we know enough, more then we can practife, they thinke these compendiums will serve the turne, as if there were not a necessity of growing still further and further in diffind knowledge. Alas the foule needs to be fed continually, it will stagger else and be unfafficient to stand against remptation, or

to performe duties.

A fecond generall point out of the text is this, That as Christ feedeth still his flocke and people, so be feeds them fully, plentifully, and sweetly among the Lillies. There are faving truths enough, there is an All-fufficiency in the Booke of God, what need we go out to mans inventions, feeing there is a fulneffe and All-fufficiency of truth there. Whatfoever is not in that is winde, or poison, in the Word is a full kind of feeding. In former times when they had not the Scriptures, and the comforts of them to feed on, what did the peore foules then ; and what doe those remaining in Popery feed on ! upon stones (as it were.) There was a dreame of an holy man in thofeeines (divers hundred yeares agone) that he faw one having a deale of manchet to feed on, and yet all the while poore wretch he fed on stones. What folly and mifery is this, when there are delicate things to feed on, to gnaw upon Rones , and what

what is all the schoole learning almost (except | SER.XX. one or two that had better spirits then the rest) but a gnawing upon stones, barren distinctions, empty things, that had no substance in them they had the Scriptures (though they were locked up in Latine, an unknowne tongue) they had the sweet pastures of Christ to fred on, and yet all this while they fed (as it were) on flones.

This (hould frew us likewife our owne bleffedneffe, that live in these times wherein the streames of the Goffell run abundantly, (weetly, and pleafantly. There is a fulneffe among us (even in the fpirits of the worft fort) there is a fulneffe almost to loathing of that heavenly Mannah-but those soules who ever were acquainted with the necessity of it rather find a want then a fulneffe, and still defire to grow up to a further defire, that as they have plentifull meanes, fo they may have plentifull affections after, and ftrength by those means: let us know our owne happineffe in these times. Is it not a comfort to know where to feed and to have pastures to goe to without suspition of poifon ? that we may feed our felves with comforts fully without feare of bane, or noisome mingling of Coloquintida in the pot, which would difrelish all the rest ? to know that there are truths that we may feed on fafely. This the Church in the former place, Camt. 1.6,7. accounted a great priviledge, ob them me where then feedeft at noone. In the greatest heate of perfecution, that I may feed among them : fo then it is a great priviledge

Our bappineffe der fuch plenty of Spiritual food SER.XX.

to know where to feed, and so to be esteemed, that therby we may be stirred up to be thankfull for our owne good, and to improve these priviledges to our soules comfort.

Obferv.

But the second branch that must be touched a little, is, That there is fulnesse no where but in Gods bouse, and that there and there onely is that which satisfieth the soule with fatnesse and sweetnesse.

That the rebukes of Scripture are sweet. of Scripture are sweet, the rebukes of a friend, they feed the soule, for we have many corruptions which hinder our Communion with God, so that a Christian delights to have his corruptions rebuked, for he knowes if he leave them, he shall grow into further Communion with Christ, wherein stands his happinesse in this world, and the fulnesse of his happinesse in the world to come.

If this be so, let us know then, that when we come to Religion we lose not the sweetnesse of our lives, but onely translate them to a farre more excellent and better condition. Perhaps we feed before upon vaine Authors, upon (as it were) gravell, vaine company, but now we have our delight (and perhaps find more pleasure) in better things, in stead of that which fed our idle fancie (vaine Treatises and the like) now wee have holy truths to delight our soule. Beleeve it, a Christian never knowes what comfort is to purpose till be be downe-right and sincere in Religion. Therefore Mustin saith of himselfe, Lord I have wanted thy

fweet-

(weetness over long, I fee all my former life (that I San XX. thought had fuch (weetneffe in it) was nothing at all but buskes, empty things mow I know where frees: nesse is it is in the Word and Truth. Therefore let us not misconceive of Religion, as of a month and dull thing, wherein we must lofe all comforts if we give our felves over to the fludy thereof must we so must we lose our compart ? May we have no comfort till we be religious indeed; Christ feeds not his among thornes and bryats and Rinking weeds, but among Lillies; doft thou thinke hee feeds thee among unfavoury, harfh, fretting, galling things ! No, he feeds among Lillies. Therefore when thou comment to Religion, thinke that thou commelt to comfort, to refresh thy foule, let us make use of this for our soules comfort to make us in love more with the waies of Chrift.

Now to scale this further, see what the Scripture saith in some paralell places, Pfal 23. The Lord is my Shepheard, and what is the use that David presently makes hereof? Why, I shall mant nothing, he will seed me plentifully be abundantly, the whole Psalme is nothing but a commenting upon that word, the Lord u my Shepheard, how doth he performe the dury of a shepheard, how doth he performe the dury of a shepheard? He makes me to by downein greene passures, and leads me by the still maters, it is not onely meant of the body, but of the soule chiefly, he restoreth my soule, that is, when my soule languisherh and is ready to faint, he restores it, and gives measit were a new soule, he restreshethit. We say recreation

How Christ the true Shepheard feeds, is juriber explained. SAR.XX.

ation is the creating of a thing anew : fo he reftores my foule, be gives me my foule anew with fresh comforts: Thus the blessed Shepheard doth, and how ? Because, he feeds among the Lillies, the promises of the Gospell; then he doth not only doe good to the body and foule; but he guides all our wayes, all our goings out, He leads me in the paths of Righteon nelle, and why because I deferve so much at his hands. No, for his owne name fake, because he hath a love to me, because he harh purchased me with his bloud, and given his life for his sheep, bath bought me for deare, though there be no worth in me. He goes on, though I walke through all temptations and troubles, which are as the valley of the shadow of death, that is, where there is nothing but disconfolation and mifery ; yet I will feare none ill, then with thy rod and staffe dost comfort me. If I, as a wandring sheep, venture to goe out of the way, thou out of thy care being a sweet and loving Shepheard wilt pull me in with thy hooke and staffe againe, he hath not care onely to feed us, but to governe us also. What a sweet Shepheard and Saviour have we in covenant that deales thus with use and to he proceeds, thou will prepare my table in the presence of mine enemies, and for the time to come he promifeth himselfe as much that God as he hath been a Shepheard, (for the prefent) to provide all things necessary for body and foule and guidance, fo furely the goodpeffe of the Lord shall follow me all the dayes of my life, for he is a perpetual! Shepheard. heard, he will not leave us till he hath brought San. XX. usto Heaven. Thus we fee in this place the fweet care of Christ.

The like place you have, Ifa. 40 tt. He fall feed his flocke like a Shepheard, he shall gather the Lambs with bu armes, and carry them in his bosome, and shall gently lead those that are with young : So he leads them into the pastures and feeds them plentifully and fweetly, not onely with fweet things, but with a tender care, which is sweeter. As a Shepheard he takes into his bosome the poore lambs that cannot walke themselves, and the sheep that are heavy with young, he cares for them, be gently leads them that are poore, weake Christians that struggle and conflict with many temptations and corruptions, Christ hath atender care of them, he carries them (as it were) in his bosome and in his armes, and leads them gently; for indeed all Christs sheep are weake, every one hath fomewhat to complaine of, therefore he hath a tender care, he feeds them tenderly and fweetly, or elfe they might perish.

Another place (notable for this purpose) foe Ezek. 34.14. wherein you have the same metaphor from a loving Shepheard; and it is but a comment upon the Text; therefore being paralell places they may help our memories: I will feed them in good pastures upon the bigh mountaines of Ifrael, there shall their fold be, there shall they lyein a good field in a fat pasture, I will feed my flocke and cause them to lye downe, faith the Lord

SER.XX.

God, I will seeke that which is lost, and bring backe that which was driven away, I will bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which is sicke, and destroy the fat and the strong and feed them with indgement. Those that are Christs true sheep have somewhat to complaine of, either they are sicke, or broken, or driven away, fomewhat is amiffe or other; but Christs care preventeth all the neceffities of his sheep, he hath a fit salve for all their fores: And (to apply this to the businesse in hand) doth not Christ feed us among the Lillies? doth he not now feed us with his own body. and bloud in the Sacrament ? would you have better food? My body is meat indeed, and my blond is drinke indeed, that is, it is the only meat (with an Emphasis) the onely meat and drinke that our foules could feed upon, God gave his Sonne to death to shed his bloud for my finnes. What would become of the hunger-bitten, thirffy foule that is stong with Satan and his temptations, were it not for the bloud of Christ to quench our thirst and the body of Christ given by the Father to death for fin, were it not that the foule could thinke upon this, where were the comfort of the foule? All this is represented to us here in the Sacrament, we feed on the body and bloud of Christ spiritually, and are refreshed thereby, as verily as our bodies are refreshed with the bread and wine. For God doth not feed us with compty fymbols and representations, but wish things themselves, that the foule which comes prepared by Faith, is partaker of Christ crucisi-

ed, and is knit to him though now in Heaven; SER.XX. there is as fure an union and communion between Christ and the Christian Joule, asthere is between the food and the body when it is once digefted.

Therefore let us come to this bleffed, to this fweet food of our foules with hungry appetites, and thankfull hearts that God hath given us the best comforts of his Word, and fed us with the fweet comfort of the Sacraments, as a Seale of the Word. We should even spend our lives much in thankfulneffe to God for this, that he will feed us fo fweetly, that thinks nothing is good enough for our food, but his owne felfe with his owne gracious Word and Truth. Thus we should be very thankfull unto God, and now at this time labour to get hungry appetites fit for this bleffed food to receive it.

How hall we doe that ?

Thinke seriously of the former part of thy life, and this weeke past : For Christ (the food of coment the foule) relisheth well with the fowre herbs of Repentance. Let us ftir up in our hearts Repentance for our finnes, and forrow in the confideration of our owne corrupt nature and life, and when we have felt our corruptions, and have the fense of our want, then Christ will be sweet to us, the Paschall Lamb was to be eaten with sowre herbs, fo Christ our Passeover must be eaten with Repentance.

Then withall there must be purging, there are many things which clog the flomacke, come purging.

How to get bungry appe-

To thinke feriously of former and prejent fins.

Hh

SeaXX.

Lam 1,11,

Confider the nesessity of spi. visual strength.

not with worldly, wicked, malicious affections which puffe up the foule, but lay afide (as the Apostle wisheth) all guile, malice and superfluity, empty the soule of all sinne and prepossessing thoughts or affections.

And then confider the necessity of spirituall strength, that we have need to grow up more and more in Christianity, to be feeding still, we have need of strong Faith and strong assurance that Christ is ours, and that we are his. Let us often frequent this ordinance, and come prepared as we should, and we shall find Christ making good

his owne ordinance in his owne best time:
fo as we shall be able to say in cruth of

heart experimentally and feelingly with the Church; My Beloved is mine and I am hu, hee feedeth among the Lillies.

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